



Strategic Plan 2020-2024

DG ENVIRONMENT

Contents

- INTRODUCTION 3
- PART 1. Delivering on the Commission’s priorities 5
 - A. Mission statement 5
 - B. Operating context..... 5
 - C. Strategy..... 6
 - General objective 1: A European Green Deal..... 6
 - Specific Objective 1 - Circular Economy 7
 - Specific Objective 2– Biodiversity 12
 - Specific Objective 3-Zero Pollution..... 15
 - Specific Objective 4-Integration:..... 19
 - Specific Objective 5-Governance 21
 - Specific Objective 6-International..... 24
 - D. Key performance indicators..... 27
- PART 2. Modernising the administration..... 28
 - A. Human resource management 28
 - B. Sound financial management 30
 - C. Fraud risk management 31
 - D. Digital transformation and information management..... 32
 - E. Sound environmental management..... 35
- ANNEX: Performance tables..... 37

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this **strategic plan** is to set out the DG Environment's (ENV) objectives and strategy for the period 2020-2024, with the double aim of maximising the DG's contribution to President von der Leyen's political ambitions and meeting outstanding commitments of EU environment policy and legislation.

The DG's policy strategy is described in **part 1** of the plan, which is structured around six specific objectives (SO). A set of indicators to monitor progress under each SO is attached in annex. **Part 2** describes the DG's approach to modernising its administration in support of policy priorities. Both parts are driven by the **European Green Deal (EGD)** vision.

The DG will pursue three thematic objectives that are fully in line with this Commission's political ambitions, as outlined in July 2019 by President von der Leyen and confirmed by the EGD in December. These concern the **circular economy**, including tackling plastics (SO1), **biodiversity** (SO2) and **zero-pollution** (SO3). A set of ambitious thematic strategies will guide the work in these areas; the 8th **Environment Action Programme** will provide an overarching framework.

Flagship environment **strategies**:

- Circular Economy Action Plan
- EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030
- Chemicals strategy for sustainability
- Zero pollution action plan for water, air and soil
- 8th Environment Action Programme

In line with the European Green Deal, the **integration of environmental considerations** (SO4) into other EU policies remains fundamental to attaining environmental goals, with EU spending programmes and **sustainable finance** as key integration targets and activities. It will also help other Commission services to uphold the green oath to 'Do no harm'. Better environmental **governance and implementation** (SO5) will be pursued in close collaboration with public and private stakeholders, including other European Institutions and in particular the European Parliament. These approaches reflect the open, inclusive and cooperative way of working that President von der Leyen asked the services to enact throughout the Commission, as well as in relationships with third parties. A broad range of **communication activities** will flank the DG's work, to help reconnecting the EU with its citizens and encourage public participation.

The **LIFE programme** will continue supporting all of the above policy objectives. While its implementation will be delegated to an executive agency, DG ENV will directly manage procurement actions. The DG's approach to **sound financial management** and fraud prevention is described in part 2 of this plan. Part 2 also presents the **HR strategy**, focused on gender balance, staff motivation, collaboration and trust. To support this Commission's ambition to modernise its administration, further efforts will go into sound **environmental management** and the **digital transformation**.

The **COVID-19** crisis poses an unprecedented challenge to the EU economy but it also offers an opportunity to accelerate investment and reforms to implement the ambitious agenda set out under the European Green Deal. DG Environment will contribute to the Commission’s work to assist Member States in using the funds available under the EU Recovery Plan to support Europe’s transition to a carbon neutral, circular and clean continent.



The EU cannot achieve the transformative changes required for the ecological transition acting alone. DG ENV’s international activities will support the **global uptake of the European Green Deal ambition**, thereby helping the EU play its role as

global leader in the green transition and contributing to the achievement of the **Sustainable Development Goals**. Achieving an ambitious global biodiversity framework post-2020 will be of the utmost importance to face the ecological crisis.

PART 1. Delivering on the Commission's priorities

A. Mission statement

The **Directorate-General for Environment (DG ENV)** leads the European Commission's policy in the field of the environment.

Its key mission is to develop and facilitate the implementation of policies and legislation that contribute to enabling EU citizens to live well, within the planet's ecological limits, based on an innovative, circular economy, where biodiversity and ecosystems are protected and restored, environment-related health risks are minimized in ways to enhance our society's resilience, and where growth has been decoupled from resource use.

B. Operating context

The **EU Treaties** establish that the EU shall pursue a policy in the field of environment with objectives to preserve, protect and improve the quality of the environment, protect human health, and promote prudent and rational utilisation of natural resources. EU environmental policy builds on the principles of preventive action, rectification of pollution at source, precaution and polluter pays. The Treaties also enable the EU to participate in **international environmental agreements**, and give the Commission a clear coordinating and representation responsibility.

Environmental policy is an area of **shared competence** between the EU and the Member States. While, for some environmental problems, action at national or local level is sufficient, many forms of environmental degradation span national borders and need to be addressed at EU level, in line with the principle of subsidiarity. Some require broader regional or even global approaches. Common solutions and international outreach may also be necessary to promote a **level-playing field** and fairer competition for companies across the single market and vis-à-vis third countries.

The **integration of environmental considerations** across EU policies and activities is also mandated by the Treaties, and requires working closely with many other Commission services. Mainstreaming environment action into the key **EU spending programmes** is fundamental to ensure sufficient investment in the green transition, at EU and international level. The **Covid-19** pandemic and its aftermath will largely determine the operational context of the current Commission's mandate. Increased coordination within the Commission and with Member States will be required to ensure that environmental investments are part of the national recovery and resilience plans to implement the EU Recovery Plan as well as under the Multiannual Financial Framework instruments for 2021-2021

DG ENV is one of the DGs responsible for **LIFE**, the only funding programme exclusively dedicated to the environment. While the role of the DG is to ensure a strong link between

LIFE and environmental policy priorities, implementation of the programme is delegated to an executive agency¹.

C. Strategy

General objective 1: A European Green Deal

The European Green Deal (EGD), adopted in December 2019, will be the guiding framework for DG Environment's policy for the coming years. During the period 2020-2024, DG ENV will lead on the main **environmental priorities of the European Green Deal** (EGD), which underpin its three thematic objectives on circular economy, biodiversity and zero pollution. These will have a strong international dimension and will be further supported by the crosscutting objectives on integration and governance.



The DG's international activities will project the EGD globally, thereby also supporting a stronger Europe in the world (general objective 4).

While focusing on environmental objectives, DG ENV's activities will significantly contribute to other policy priorities, within the EGD and beyond. Most importantly, EU Environment policy is key to achieve a **climate-neutral Europe**. Additionally DG ENV will play a key role in transforming the products and value chains with the biggest environmental impacts. A good understanding of environmental impacts needs to underpin the transformative changes towards more **sustainable food, energy, mobility and building** systems. Beyond these priorities, efforts to mainstream environmental considerations across policies and activities will help DGs to respect the EGD oath to **do no harm**.

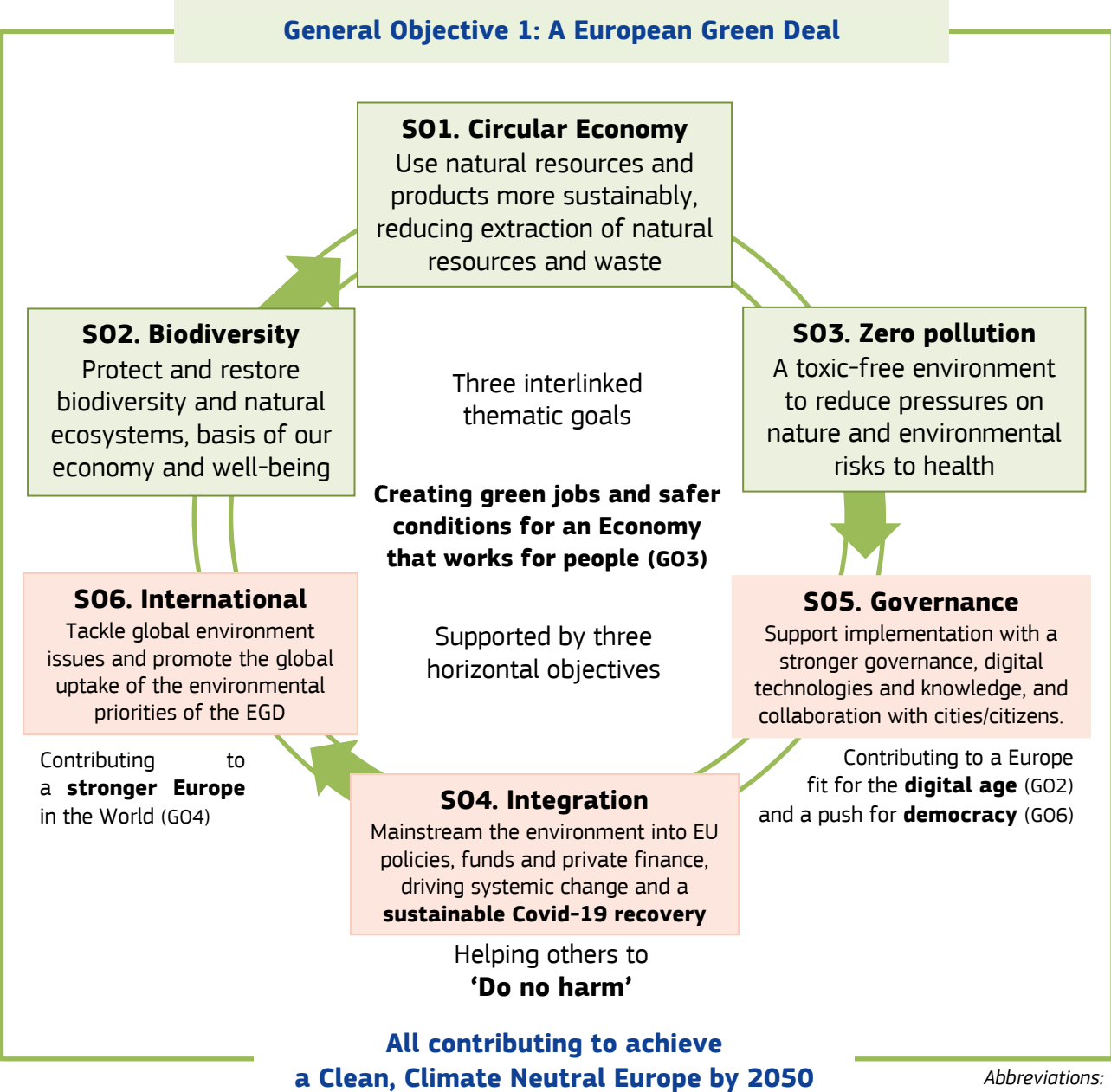
The DG will give careful consideration to the social and employment effects of environmental policies and, in line with the **just transition** ambition, strive to leave no one behind.

Applying circular economy principles will open up new opportunities for Europe's industry, businesses and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs, contributing to an **economy that works for people** (general objective 3). Increasing the use of new technologies to support policy development, implementation and enabling circular business models, while at the same time reducing the environmental impact of digital products and services, will be the main DG's contribution to the **Digital Europe** (general objective 2). By strengthening environmental governance, the DG will be contributing to a push for European **democracy** (general objective 6).

¹ The Executive Agency for Small and Medium Enterprises (EASME) for the current programming period. The European Climate and Infrastructure Executive Agency (ECIEA) from 2021.

Considering the many important initiatives that are to be developed, the DG will prioritise **better regulation** when designing new policies and aim for targeted regulation that achieves objectives and bring benefits at minimum cost.

For the period 2020-2024, DG ENV’s **communication activities** will centre round the EGD, promoting circular economy and sustainability, biodiversity protection and emissions reduction; actions to improve health and quality of life will be highlighted, to connect with citizens and in line with the zero pollution ambition. The DG will actively participate in the preparation and promotion of corporate communication campaigns.



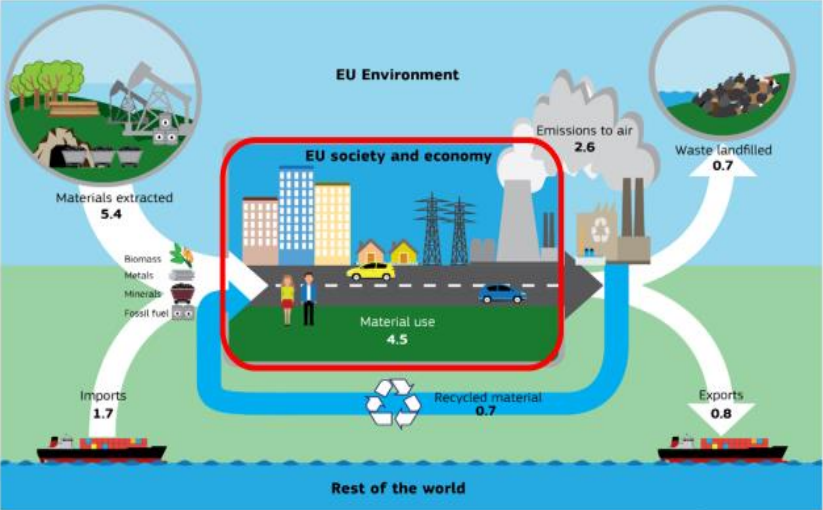
Abbreviations:
GO: General Objective
SO: Specific Objective

Specific Objective 1 - Circular Economy: The EU economy is more circular and uses natural resources and products more sustainably

President von der Leyen, through her mission letter, asked the Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries to “lead the work on a new Circular Economy Action Plan to ensure sustainable resource use, notably in resource-intensive and high-impact sectors”. In December 2019, the European Green Deal (EGD) identified the circular economy as a cornerstone of Europe’s new growth strategy. The new Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP), developed by DGs ENV and GROW within the first 100 days of the mandate, aims to contribute to a climate-neutral economy where growth is decoupled from resource use and its environmental impacts.

The CEAP presents 35 interrelated initiatives devised to make products, services and business models more sustainable, transform consumption patterns, reduce, and transform waste into new resources, in Europe and beyond. Its implementation will involve several Commission services as well as a broad range of stakeholders, from EU institutions to

Material flows in EU, 2017, billion tonnes per year (Gt/year)



Member States, regions, businesses and citizens at large. While this will be a genuine team effort, the present strategic plan focuses on DG ENV’s role and its main work strands for the period.

Resource extraction and processing are the biggest drivers of biodiversity loss and greenhouse gas emissions. Implementing

the CEAP will therefore contribute to achieve the DG’s specific objectives on biodiversity and zero pollution, meet international climate commitments and reach climate neutrality for the EU by 2050.

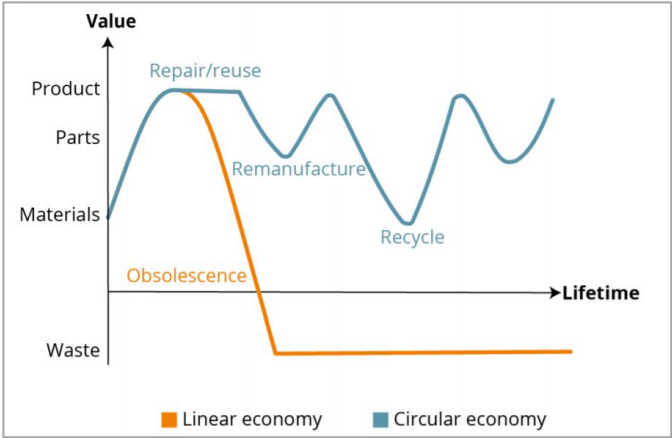
Sustainable Product Policy

By 2024, a strong and coherent product policy framework will be established to ensure that sustainable products, services and business models are the norm and that consumption patterns are transformed.

In collaboration with DGs GROW and ENER, a **legislative proposal on sustainable product policy** will focus on the design phase to ensure that products placed on the EU market last longer and are easier to reuse, repair and recycle. Building on the experience with the EU Ecolabel Regulation, the Product Environmental Footprint approach and the Green Public Procurement criteria, it will widen the scope of the Ecodesign Directive to apply beyond energy-related products. Further measures would restrict single-use products and ban programmed obsolescence and the destruction of unsold durable goods. As

regards material use, setting minimum recycled content thresholds in new products will be explored for several sectors, and the presence of hazardous chemicals and other contaminants will be tackled to increase the quality and uptake of secondary raw materials.

Consumers can effectively drive change by demanding sustainable services and products. For this, however, they need to receive trustworthy information and have the option to choose reusable, durable and repairable products. To avoid greenwashing, DG ENV will propose that companies substantiate their



environmental claims using sound EU environmental footprint methods. This initiative will be developed in close coordination with DG JUST’s revision of EU consumer law to empower consumers for active participation in the green transition. Collaboration with DGs JUST and GROW will also be relevant to encourage an effective right to repair for EU citizens. The **DG’s communication activities** will help raise awareness about the benefits of more circular products for citizens, their environment and the economy.

Public purchasing power amounts to 14% of the EU GDP. Public authorities should lead by example in choosing environmentally friendly goods, services and works, thereby creating demand for circular alternatives and supporting companies that invest in green products and services. In recent years, DG ENV has published green procurement criteria for various product groups. Based on these, and feedback from procurers, the Commission will provide further guidance on green public purchasing and consider binding measures in sectors such as batteries, packaging and vehicles.

A European **Dataspace for Smart Circular Applications** will be launched to gather useful data and ensure that the right information is available to businesses and consumers along value chains, for example through digital product passports.

Eco-innovation is key to delivering many aspects of the circular economy, from new product design to extended producer responsibility schemes, industrial symbiosis and innovative business models. Coordinated by DG ENV, the European Business Awards for Environment and the European Forum for Eco-innovation will be reshaped to further promote eco-innovative circular solutions and fit the new EU SME Strategy.



Monitoring performance

Keeping materials in the economy for as long as possible contributes to increasing **resource productivity** (impact indicator #1), which provides a measure for decoupling economic growth from resource use, from the production perspective.

Circular material use (impact indicator #5) is another approach. It looks at the share of material recovered and fed back into the economy, thus saving extraction of primary raw materials. The CEAP has set the target for the EU to double circular material use rate by 2030. This indicator will help show if the EU is on track to meet this target, or not.

The **EU Ecolabel** helps consumers to identify environment-friendly products. Circularity requirements, including recycled content, durability and reparability, are being gradually incorporated into existing and new product criteria. Uptake of this label (result indicator 1.1) will be monitored as an indicator of for more circular products.

The **eco-innovation index** (result indicator 1.2) will provide a measure of EU business interest in innovative approaches to increase circularity).

Key value chains and waste streams

While the sustainable product initiative aims to cover all products, business and related services in the EU, additional measures are foreseen for sectors that use most resources and pose higher sustainability challenges.

EU legislation on **batteries** will be revised in 2020, in collaboration with DG GROW. One of the aims will be to reduce Europe's raw material dependency by improving the collection of discarded batteries. It will also establish sustainability and transparency standards, to protect the environment and ensure a level playing field for companies working in this.

Plastics remain a global challenge and a priority for the von der Leyen Commission. Implementation of the 2018 strategy will continue, as will the efforts to launch negotiations towards a **global agreement on plastics**. The plastics value chain, in particular the recycling sector, has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. The Commission has proposed a new EU revenue stream ("Own Resource") based on the non-recycled plastic-packaging waste that will support the uptake of recycled plastic. Additional measures to restrict the unintentional release of **microplastics** will be proposed, and the possible benefits of certain applications of bio-based and biodegradable plastics will be analysed, with a view to boosting innovation while protecting human health and the environment. The proper transposition of the Single Use Plastics Directive, due in July 2021, will be an enforcement priority.

”By 2050, there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish. We need to get serious about how we turn the tide. European legislation already applies to the ten most found plastic items on European beaches. I want to open a new front in our fight against plastic waste by tackling micro-plastics.

*President von der Leyen,
Political guidelines*

In the wake of the plastics strategy, and in collaboration with DG GROW, a comprehensive EU strategy for **sustainable textiles** will be launched, with measures to stimulate the market for sustainable and circular textiles in the EU. Contributing to greening the

Information and Communication Technologies sector will be fundamental, to contain its environmental impacts and support the digital transition ambition of the Commission.

Waste prevention and treatment close the loop of the circular economy, help maximise the value of materials and minimise material consumption. In the EU, each citizen produces nearly half a tonne of waste per year. Prevention targets will be proposed to reduce the production of waste. Where waste cannot be prevented, it must be well managed and treated, starting from its collection. A single model for separate collection and labelling of products will be proposed, to further improve and harmonise waste management across the EU.



The **waste acquis is under evaluation**² and several far-reaching legislative updates will follow, to bring about a paradigm shift from managing waste to preventing it. Targets that are more ambitious will be proposed, for instance on recycled content in packaging. When waste cannot be avoided, the updates will look at optimising treatment and boosting markets for secondary raw materials. Industrial symbiosis will be further encouraged for streams such as end-of-life vehicles and waste oils, to help modernise European industry and ensure that the wastes of an industrial process become the raw materials for another.

Europe is still the biggest exporter of waste globally and, in many cases, **waste exports** result both in negative environmental and health impacts in the countries of destination, and in loss of resources and economic opportunities for the European recycling industry. These issues will be addressed through reviews of the Waste Shipment and Ship Recycling Regulations.

Moreover, boosting **water efficiency** and circular economy in the water industry will also be pursued to reduce water consumption but also plastic use. Implementing the revised drinking water directive and new legislation on water reuse will be key under the mandate and entail preparing a number of Commission implementing measures as well as supporting Member States, regions and cities to apply them. These efforts will be closely linked to the actions under the zero pollution ambition (see also S03).

To support the circular economy and new waste paradigm, DG ENV has identified and will pursue the following **enforcement priorities**: i) the proper transposition of the 2018 waste legislative package (due in July 2020); ii) the enforcement of the Court of Justice of the EU judgments under Article 258 and Article 260 TFEU; iii) the systemic breaches of EU waste legislation or breaches presenting serious adverse consequences or risks for human health and the environment (fight against illegal landfilling and compliance with pre-treatment rules); iv) the timely and correct adoption of Waste Management Plans and Prevention Programmes (due in July 2020); v) the compliance with structural obligations (in

² Detail of the ongoing and planned evaluations are available in the Interinstitutional Studies Database

particular, reporting and the ship recycling framework), and as from 2022, vi) the attainment of the municipal waste recycling targets.

At **global level**, DG ENV will also step up its international engagement on promoting the global circular economy transition at multilateral, regional and bilateral level. A **Global Circular Economy Alliance** will be set up with lead UN agencies and regional efforts for example in Latin America or Africa strengthened. Sustainable consumption and production will be further pursued through the **G7** and **G20** Resource Efficiency Dialogues and in the OECD. **Circular economy missions** to interested countries will continue to be organised, partnering with UN agencies, knowledge providers and business other stakeholders. (Specific Objective 6).



Monitoring performance

Waste trends help to verify that existing and new measures are effectively working together towards a more circular economy.

*Halving residual (non-treated) municipal waste by 2030 is an EU target in the new CEAP. **Municipal waste generation and treatment** (result indicator 1.3) will be one of DG ENV's key performance indicators during the mandate. **Waste exports** will be monitored (result indicator 1.4), in response to the EGD call to restrict exports outside the EU, and as an indirect measure of the dynamism of secondary raw materials markets.*

*Under Specific objective 5, the results of **enforcement action** will provide an indication of better waste implementation in particular concerning landfill (see result indicator 5.2).*

*Finally, the DG's activities aim to increase the recycling rate of **plastic packaging** (impact indicator #6), an indicator linked to the Plastics Strategy and EU packaging legislation.*

Specific Objective 2– Biodiversity: Biodiversity and natural ecosystems in the EU are put on the path to recovery by stepping up the protection and restoration of nature

Political awareness of the **nature and biodiversity crisis** reached a critical point in 2019. In April 2019, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) published the first-ever global biodiversity assessment. It showed worldwide decline, caused primarily by changes in how land and sea are used and direct exploitation of natural resources, with climate change, pollution and invasive species as further drivers of biodiversity loss. It was a historical wake-up call for action to avoid a mass extinction, and resonated strongly in the context of growing public concern. Evidence of the links between ecosystem degradation and zoonotic diseases has recently added a further sense of urgency to this concern.

President von der Leyen, in her political guidelines, gave unprecedented priority to nature and biodiversity. Their protection was entrusted to the Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, and the imperative to **mainstream biodiversity standards** into other key portfolios was strongly underlined. In December 2019, the EGD confirmed an

ambitious agenda for the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems at EU and global level.

In May 2020, building on the experience with the previous biodiversity framework and input from a range of stakeholders, the Commission adopted the **EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030 (BDS)**. The BDS sets out specific targets, commitments and measures to tackle

Establish protected areas for at least:



30%
of land in
Europe



30%
of sea in
Europe

pressures on biodiversity and restore degraded ecosystems. Developed during the **COVID-19** pandemic, the BDS takes full account of the crisis and aims to contribute to the recovery, build longer-term resilience and help prevent future similar crises. All of this will guide DG ENV's work under this specific objective, which mirrors the BDS headline commitment to put Europe's biodiversity



Increasing organic farming and biodiversity-rich landscape features on agricultural land



Halting and reversing the decline of pollinators



Restoring at least 25 000 km of EU rivers to a free-flowing state



Reducing the use and risk of pesticides by 50% by 2030



Planting 3 billion trees by 2030

and ecosystems on the path to recovery by 2030, for the benefit of people, climate and the planet.

At the international level, the immediate priority will be preparing for a successful result at the **15th Conference of the Parties to the Biodiversity Convention**, which will determine the level of ambition of the global action against biodiversity loss for the coming decade. The fight against **wildlife trafficking**, illegal logging and **deforestation** will be stepped up with a new Wildlife Action Plan and a legal framework to minimise the risk that EU consumption drives deforestation or forest degradation.

At EU level, as a first step the DG will prepare a legislative proposal for legally binding **targets to restore degraded ecosystems**. This will focus on ecosystem's potential to capture and store carbon and to prevent and reduce the impact of natural disasters. Building on the Natura 2000 network, protected areas will be expanded across the EU, notably for areas of high biodiversity value on land and water. Restoring ecosystems is about saving species, their habitats and their interactions and, in turn, about saving the essential services they provide, such as food, fresh water and clean air, mitigation of natural disasters and diseases and their role in regulating the climate.

The transformative change envisioned by the BDS requires institutional commitment at all levels and across all administrations and economic sectors. DG ENV will explore options to **strengthen the governance framework**. Nature protection will be a priority in the DG's strategic approach to enforcement, while additional efforts will be deployed to help Member States fully implement existing nature legislation, including on invasive alien species.

In parallel, work with stakeholder groups will continue, *inter alia* on natural capital accounts and sustainable finance, through the **EU Business and Biodiversity Platform**. Better monitoring and knowledge are also essential. In this regard, both the Environmental Knowledge Community and the proposed new **Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity** will

play key roles, together with continued work on the mapping and assessment of ecosystems. Awareness of planetary boundaries needs to be part of the cultural change that will accompany the ecological transition and Biodiversity will continue to be a top priority in **external communication** during the mandate. Ongoing cooperation with science museums, natural history museums, aquariums, parks and so forth will be further developed, and virtual reality used to bring nature closer to Europeans.

Within the Commission, collaboration with other services, in particular DGs CLIMA, AGRI, SANTE, REGIO and MARE, will be paramount. **Agriculture, forestry and fisheries** go hand in hand with the biodiversity on which they depend and have a great impact on its health.

Mainstreaming biodiversity standards in agriculture and regional development policies and implementing the **EU pollinators** initiative will be fundamental to halt and reverse the decline in farmland birds and pollinator insects. A new **EU Forest Strategy** will be developed and focus on afforestation and forests' resilience, to boost forest services as hosts of biodiversity and for climate change mitigation and adaptation.



An **Integrated Nutrient Management Action Plan** will also be developed to maintain plant nutrient supply and soil fertility. Further ways to tackle soil degradation and land use change – major threats to biodiversity – will be proposed through a revision of the **EU Soil Strategy**. Internationally, the DG will continue to support global efforts towards achieving a land-degradation neutral world and combating desertification, land degradation and drought, particularly through the effective implementation of the UN **Convention to Combat Desertification** and its 2018-2030 Strategic Framework.

Oceans and seas, and the services they provide are under severe pressure from overexploitation, land-based pollution and the impacts of climate change. The **Marine Strategy Framework Directive** will be reviewed and, if necessary, improved, in collaboration with DG MARE and in coherence with related instruments.

Implementing the **Farm to Fork** strategy, which was developed in parallel with the BDS and shares common targets, will, as a priority, help to ensure that agricultural production, fisheries and aquaculture, and the entire food sector are more compatible with safeguarding biodiversity in oceans and land. Efforts to reduce the extraction of natural resources under the CEAP will also contribute, as will the Zero pollution activities described under Specific Objective 3.

Enforcement action will also be required to curtail biodiversity loss and improve its recovery. The following strategic priorities will be actively pursued: i) the insufficiency of the Natura 2000 network; ii) the lack of designation of Special Areas of Conservation and the absence of conservation objectives and measures; iii) the insufficient protection of species and habitats in decline. These actions aim to support the completion of the designations and the adoption of the appropriate conservation objectives and measures across the EU.

They should also secure the protection of key species and habitats, the reversal of declining trends by preventing damaging impacts from infrastructure projects or illegal logging.



Monitoring performance

DG ENV will monitor trends relevant to the new EU Biodiversity Strategy, such as the **percentage of areas under the Natura 2000** network (result indicator 2.1), and the **grassland butterfly index** (result indicator 2.2). The result of **enforcement action** under Specific Objective 5 (result indicator 5.3) will be important to measure progress in the implementation of nature legislation. These trends will have an influence on the evolution of birds populations (impact indicator #2 of the corporate framework).

The conservation status of species and habitats are fundamental indicators for DG ENV and subject to mandatory reporting under the Habitats and Birds directives. An assessment based on the period 2013-2018 will be delivered in 2020 and provide a baseline for action to improve the status and trends of protected species and habitats. The next assessment, however, will not be available during this mandate, and therefore the trend will not be monitored as part of the DG's performance framework.

Despite presenting similar timeliness and regularity issues, an indicator on **land take** (result indicator 2.3) has been included, for lack of alternatives and to cover the 2050 "No net land take" BDS target, as well as the Land Degradation Neutrality target of the Sustainable Development Goals. A six-year update will be available in 2024.

Specific Objective 3-Zero Pollution: Citizens and natural ecosystems are better protected from environmental pressures and risks to health as a result of Europe's zero-pollution ambition and measures for a toxic-free environment

As President von der Leyen stated in her political guidelines, Europe needs to move towards a zero pollution ambition, to protect the **health of citizens**, their descendants and the environment they will inhabit. The EGD calls for a toxic-free environment, to be achieved through a wide-ranging approach looking at air, water, marine and soil, but also noise, hazardous chemicals and other pollution from industry, transport, agriculture, food production and other key areas.

DG ENV will design an ambitious **chemicals strategy** and a **zero-pollution action plan** to address these interlinked challenges. These strategic initiatives will largely determine DG ENV's activities under its third specific objective. They will also contribute to the circular economy (SO1) by tackling in particular the presence of hazardous substances in products, secondary materials and waste, and will help protect ecosystems, such as soil, from pollution and other impacts of industrial activities, thus also supporting SO2 on biodiversity. The DG's **external communication** activities will help to demonstrate the close connections between public and planetary health.

The interaction with other Commission policies will be very relevant to develop and implement ambitious zero-pollution measures. **Collaboration** will be particularly close with

DGs CLIMA, GROW, MOVE, ENER, MARE, SANTE, EMPL, RTD and the JRC, as well as with agencies (mainly EEA and ECHA).

More sustainable chemicals

Chemicals contribute to our well-being, life expectancy and comfort; they support agriculture and mobility and are crucial for strategic industries such as pharmaceuticals and medical equipment. They will play an important role in the development of the new technologies necessary to achieve a circular and climate-neutral economy.

However, chemical pollution causes harm to health and the environment. Through the **chemicals strategy for sustainability** the DG will aim to better protect citizens and the environment against hazardous chemicals and encourage the development of safe and sustainable alternatives.

As part of the strategy, and building on the findings of recent and ongoing evaluations, the EU legal framework for chemicals will be simplified and strengthened, in collaboration with relevant DGs, in particular GROW and SANTE. The new framework will reflect scientific evidence on the risks posed by nanomaterials, endocrine disruptors, very persistent chemicals, hazardous chemicals in products and the combination effects of substances, issues on which the DG has developed a substantial knowledge base, *inter alia* through the evaluation of existing policies and legislation. Measures to improve collaboration with EU agencies and scientific bodies will be developed to move towards the 'one substance – one assessment' principle, thereby enhancing transparency when prioritising action on chemicals.



In parallel, the DG will continue implementing existing chemicals legislation, in collaboration with DG GROW and ECHA. Decisions on the restrictions and authorisation of chemicals³ and on harmonised classifications of substances and mixtures⁴ will be proposed, aiming to balance the society's need to use chemicals in the pursuit of prosperity and the safeguard of human health and the environment from the risks arising from that very use.

The **COVID-19 crisis** has increased the urgency of stepping up action in the chemicals area to protect human health and the environment and ensure societal resilience. The DG will devise measures to help to enhance the EU's autonomy in the production of pharmaceuticals and disinfectants, promote research and support the creation of a green and sustainable manufacturing capacity in Europe. Once adopted, the chemicals strategy will also enable the EU to be at the forefront of international activities and contribute to the sound management of chemicals at global level.

³ Implementation of [Regulation \(EC\) No 1907/2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals \(REACH\)](#)

⁴ Implementation of [Regulation \(EC\) No 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures \(CLP\)](#)

Contributing to establish the new Strategic Approach to **International Chemicals Management** and the future policy on sound management of chemicals and waste at global level will be key. The DG will also continue representing the EU in **multilateral environment agreements** on issues such as mercury, waste, persistent organic pollutants, and trade in hazardous substances⁵.



Monitoring performance

*In 2018, chemicals with properties hazardous for human health still represented 74% of the total chemical production in Europe. DG ENV will use the number of **authorisations and restrictions of substances** issued under EU legislation (indicator 3.1) as an indication of the gradual substitution of hazardous chemicals by safer alternatives. These decisions will influence the **consumption of hazardous chemicals** (impact indicator #3 of the corporate performance framework).*

Zero pollution. Air, water and soil.

A key aim of the EGD is to decouple prosperity from harmful levels of pollution, for a toxic-free environment. **Clean air, waters and soils** are traditional goals of EU Environment policy. With the **zero pollution action plan** DG ENV will continue the pursuit of these goals through a systemic approach, both within and beyond EU borders. Enhancing the competitiveness of the European industry will also be an aim of this plan.

In synergy with the Chemicals Strategy, the zero pollution action plan will announce measures to boost cleaner products and technologies, promote nature-based solutions and prioritise pollution prevention over remediation, thereby contributing to protect human health and the environment. It will help to build up a **more sustainable economy** and create job opportunities after the pandemic. Since pollution disproportionately affects the most vulnerable of our society, it will also contribute to **reduce social inequalities**.



Particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide are very harmful air pollutants

Linked to the zero pollution ambition, DG ENV will follow up on recent evaluations of EU legislation addressing health and environment, notably on **air, noise and water**. Innovative ways of fostering implementation and compliance will be proposed across sectors, not least to prevent accidents. New data sources and digital technologies will be better used and help alleviate administrative burden. Strategic enforcement of issues most relevant to human health will be part of the approach, to ensure that EU rules achieve results on the ground. This will be complemented with ambitious updates in the areas of **industrial emissions and wastewater treatment**.

⁵ Implementing the Minamata (mercury), Stockholm (Persistent Organic Pollutants), Rotterdam (International trade on hazardous chemicals and pesticides), Basel (transboundary movement of hazardous waste) and conventions,

Additional measures will be considered to address soil pollution, the impact of pollutants on biodiversity and pollutants of emerging concern, thereby supporting the pollution-related actions under the Biodiversity Strategy (SO2).

A set of initiatives on awareness raising and training will be devised to support the zero pollution ambition. Different ways to boost investments in research, foresight and data tools will be explored. A monitoring framework will be established and help assess the state of pollution across the EU, its main drivers and impacts on health and ecosystems in a more integrated way.

International action will also be promoted, to tackle pollution at source and reduce both imports and exports of pollution impacts, including in products. The zero pollution ambition provides a strong basis for the EU to build on the outcomes of the third meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA3) “Towards a Pollution-free Planet” and the Pollution Implementation Plan agreed at the fourth meeting (UNEA4). The DG will promote policies and actions to fight pollution through its participation in bilateral, regional (e.g. UNECE Air Convention; regional seas conventions; water convention and platforms) and multilateral level.

Throughout the mandate, DG ENV’s **enforcement strategy** will, as a priority, support the zero pollution ambition and its crosscutting drive. The following priorities will be actively pursued:

- to fight **air pollution** and improve air quality, with direct health and economic benefits: i) action against inadequate measures to meet air quality standards for key pollutants (PM₁₀, NO₂, SO₂, PM_{2.5} and benzo(a)pyrene); ii) inadequate monitoring of air quality and iii) restrictions on access to justice and ineffective penalties.
- to improve the take up of **water management** obligations: i) the substandard collection and treatment of urban wastewaters; ii) the non-respect of obligations on Nitrates Action Plans and the non-designation of nitrate vulnerable zones; iii) systemic breaches or serious health risks resulting from non-compliance with the rules on drinking water and iv) water status is correctly monitored and assessed in all Member States so as to achieve good status/potential by 2027. These priorities aim notably to reduce the amount of uncollected/untreated wastewater and improve the quality of groundwater and drinking water.
- to further reduce harmful **industrial emissions**, in particular from large and medium combustion plants, and to **prevent major accidents** involving dangerous substances: i) ensure that EU rules are correctly transposed by all Member States and that ii) the authorisations of all major installations across the EU integrate the agreed best available techniques and any derogations given by Member States are adequately justified. These actions should contribute to improving air and water quality and ensuring an economic level playing field across the EU.

In respect of **noise pollution**, the enforcement action will focus in particular on the absence of noise maps and action plans, to help restraining the harmful noise exposure of citizens.



Monitoring performance

Pending the development of the zero pollution monitoring framework, a selection of existing indicators will help measure performance under this objective. This include urban population exposed to **air pollution** emissions and **noise** (result indicators 3.1 and 3.2). Exposure to **fine particulate matter** will be a key performance indicator and contribute to determine the **years of life lost** due to fine particulate matter in the air (impact indicator #4 of the corporate framework). Result indicator 5.4, on **compliance with Air Quality** legislation, will also be relevant.

Biochemical oxygen demand (result indicator 3.3) will provide a regular assessment of fresh water quality, and **groundwaters polluted by nitrates** will be monitored both for water and soil (result indicator 3.4).

As regards industrial emissions, an indicator on **industrial pollution intensity** will address pollution damage on air and water from EU large industry (result indicator 3.5).

Specific Objective 4-Integration: Environmental concerns are integrated, and biodiversity standards mainstreamed, across EU policies, investments and finance, through existing consultation mechanisms and a proactive approach to coordination

Besides environmental measures, achieving the environmental objectives of the EGD will require an overall **reduction of pressures** on the environment, and hence reinforced mainstreaming across policy areas.

» Preserving and restoring our ecosystem needs to guide all of our work. We must set new standards for biodiversity cutting across trade, industry, agriculture and economic policy.

*President von der Leyen,
Political guidelines*

In her political guidelines, president von der Leyen stressed in particular the need to mainstream biodiversity across economic sectors. The integration of environmental concerns into EU policies and activities is also a core Commission goal under Article 11 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. This mandate underpins DG ENV's fourth specific objective.

The DG will contribute to the development of the new measures announced in the EGD to tackle pressures from the **sectors with the highest impacts** on the environment, notably the food (*Farm to Fork*), mobility (*Smart mobility strategy*), construction (*Renovation wave*) and energy systems (*Energy Systems Integration and Hydrogen Strategies*). In this context, DGs REGIO, AGRI, MARE, GROW, MOVE, RTD and SANTE will be crucial partners throughout the mandate.

The DG's participation in the **European Semester**, coordinated by DG ECFIN, will also be reinforced, to match its increased environmental dimension. Greening national budgets and sending the right **price signals** are part of the revamped Semester and will remain priorities. Supporting DGs TAXUD and ENER on **environmental taxation** will help shifting taxes from labour towards pollution and facilitate sustainability-based fiscal reforms in

Member States. Natural capital and biodiversity considerations needs to be integrated into business practices and corporate governance. The DG will pursue the **natural capital management** approach as a powerful means to engage business and financial actors in protecting and restoring nature and biodiversity.

Public and private investments will be fundamental to cope with the technological developments and the renovated infrastructures required for the green transition.

LIFE remains the only EU programme exclusively dedicated to the environment and climate action. With a small tranche of the EU budget, it supports activities that, given their nature, would not be financed at national level, focusing on relatively small-scale projects that catalyse broader actions. DG ENV will ensure that a strong link is maintained between LIFE and the EU environment policies and legislation.

Frontloading environmental investments and reforms and promoting the ‘do no harm’ principle in the implementation of the **EU Recovery and Resilience Facility (Next Generation EU)** and of the revised **Multiannual Financial Framework** (MFF) will be essential elements to determine progress on the green agenda.

The reinforced **InvestEU** programme will be key to delivering the circular economy and natural capital objectives of this Commission. DG ENV’s approach will include working upstream to ensure that guidance on sustainability proofing and environmental tracking is readily available before implementation starts. Reaching out to internal and external stakeholders and contributing to good governance mechanisms will be part of this effort.

This approach can also help ensure that **Next Generation EU** is implemented in line with the Commission’s long-term environmental objectives. This emergency programme proposed by the Commission aims to help recover from the economic and social damage after the coronavirus pandemic and make the EU economies more sustainable, resilient and better prepared for the challenges posed by the twin green and digital transitions. DG ENV will ensure that the financial support under the **Recovery and Resilience Facility** will be greened. In particular, the DG will propose relevant investment areas, projects and reforms to be included in the Recovery and Resilience Plans to be prepared by Member States. This will be closely linked to the work under European Semester and the Environmental Implementation Review.

Wider application of sustainable finance principles will be paramount. The Commission has announced that the EU **sustainable finance taxonomy**, designed to mobilise private funds, will guide Europe’s recovery. This requires completing the development of ambitious criteria to identify green activities. DG ENV’s contribution will focus on new criteria for sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources, transition to circular economy, pollution prevention and control, protection and restoration of ecosystems and biodiversity. Exploiting the full potential of the taxonomy to finance the green transition and prevent harmful investments will be a challenge and a great opportunity for the integration of environmental considerations across economic sectors, in the EU and the world.

The Commission’s ambition on biodiversity, embodied in the 2030 strategy, will need to be reflected in **agriculture and rural development** activities, as well as in the

implementation of the **common fisheries policy**, which are vital for biodiversity and ecosystems. Screening **cohesion policy** programmes (including the Just Transition Fund) and projects will be equally fundamental, as they are a key source for Member States' investments in sectors such as water, air quality, waste management, pollution prevention and the protection of biodiversity and the marine environment. Environmental planning tools such as Waste Management Plans, Programme of Measures related to water management and Prioritised Action Frameworks for Natura 2000 and related green infrastructure will help identify strategic priorities for investment. Activities funded by the **Trans-European Networks** will also be screened, to help identify environmentally friendly projects and avoid those harming the environment. A strengthened approach to sustainability and integration into the programmes that **support Europe's global partners** will further help to promote EU's environmental standards abroad.



Monitoring performance

*DG ENV will monitor the percentage of funds dedicated to environmental issues by **key integration funds**, as well as the results achieved by Member States using **cohesion funds** in sectors such as waste, habitats, floods and others (result indicators 4.1 to 4.3). Environmental **taxation** will also be monitored (indicator 4.4)*

Specific Objective 5-Governance: There is an enabling framework for implementation based on strong governance and enforcement action, supported by advanced knowledge and digital technologies, close collaboration with cities and citizens' engagement

EU environment legislation and policies constitute the most comprehensive set of standards in the world. There are, however, substantial **implementation gaps** in areas such as air and water quality, waste and wastewater treatment, nature and biodiversity protection, and environmental governance. These issues directly concern citizens' health and the state of the environment, and are relevant for the EU economy. Full implementation of EU environmental legislation could save the EU around EUR 55 billion every year in health and other costs linked to the environment.



In her **mission letter** to Commissioner Sinkevičius, President von der Leyen asked the Commissioner to focus on the application and enforcement of EU law, adding that “any legislation is only as good as its implementation”. The EGD confirmed that the Commission will work with the Member States to step up the EU's efforts to ensure that current legislation and policies relevant to the Green Deal are enforced and effectively implemented.

This will be the overarching theme of the **8th Environment Action Programme** (8th EAP), to be proposed in 2020 in collaboration with DG CLIMA. The proposal will aim to ensure that the EU remains on track to achieve its environmental and climate objectives, as set out in the *acquis* as well as in the EGD and initiatives adopted under it. With a reinforced approach to achieving results and a mechanism to monitor progress, the 8th EAP will be instrumental to bridge implementation gaps.

A **strong governance** framework is a key requirement, addressing the rules on *how* things should be done rather than *what* needs to be done in any particular sector. The public's rights of **access to justice, participation** in decision-making, and **access to information** are at the core of good environmental governance and will be strengthened. DG ENV will propose to revise EU legislation on access to justice on environmental matters, as announced in the EGD and in line with the Aarhus Convention⁶ to which the EU is a party.

Access to information will also be enhanced, from the double perspective of strengthening citizens' rights and improving data standards, to ensure that high quality information is publicly available, reusable and comparable. To this end, the DG will review the directives on the right to information⁷ and on the standardisation of spatial data⁸. This combined review will also be the basis to launch the **GreenData4All** initiative announced in the European data strategy⁹, as part of the new common "EGD data space". The main aim will be to maximise the potential benefits of using data in support of climate change, circular economy, biodiversity, zero pollution and compliance assurance.

Work will also continue to ensure a strong and dynamic **knowledge base** for policy development and implementation. In collaboration with knowledge partners¹⁰, and across the DG's thematic priorities, several projects will be launched to fully exploit innovative approaches, such as **citizens' science** and **foresight**. Scientific evidence and sound economic analysis will underpin policy development, legislation and its evaluation, in line with **Better Regulation** principles.



Providing support to Member States – the primary implementers of EU legislation – will remain at the core of the efforts to boost implementation. DG ENV's proactive approach will continue through the **Environmental Implementation Review (EIR)**, a periodic process directed towards achieving the intended results of EU rules and policies. Through the EIR, the DG will provide country-specific analysis and an overview of implementation in the EU, with a comparative perspective to identify common causes of implementation gaps and possible solutions. This will encourage Member States to step up compliance efforts and thereby help reducing the need for enforcement action by the Commission. Close

⁶ UN/ECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

⁷ Directive 2003/4/EC on public access to environmental information

⁸ Directive 2007/2/EC establishing an Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication-european-strategy-data-19feb2020_en.pdf

¹⁰ See also part 2, point D: Digital Transformation and information management

collaboration between the DG and the European networks of environmental agencies, inspectors, auditors, police, prosecutors and judges, will also contribute.

When other avenues have been exhausted, and based on files prepared by DG ENV, the Commission may take **enforcement action** against Member States falling short of EU standards. DG ENV's strategic approach to enforcement will support the implementation of the EGD policy priorities, as reflected in the DG thematic objectives. It will also focus on the implementation of horizontal instruments that underpin good governance, including the rules for the mandatory assessment of plans, programmes and projects¹¹, as well as legislation on environmental crime and liability.

With more than 75% of Europeans living in urban areas, cities are critical to implementing environmental legislation. DG ENV will continue promoting initiatives such as the **European Green Capital and Green Leaf Awards**, designed to encourage sustainable urban policies and planning. In 2020, the DG will launch a new **Green City Accord** to mobilise more cities to achieve cleaner and healthier environments. By signing the accord, majors will commit to taking more stringent action to improve air and water quality, increase the efficiency of water use: improve municipal waste management and advance the circular economy, strengthen nature protection and tackle noise pollution. The accord will complement the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and other EU City initiatives, and support the EGD and the SDGs. An EU Urban Greening Platform will also be set up to support urban greening and boost urban biodiversity, including planting additional trees in and around cities, in line with the commitments of the BDS.



Communication activities will be key to connect and engage citizens in environmental implementation. The [Europa Environment website](#), maintained by the DG, is the primary tool to inform citizens about EU environmental policies and initiatives. Over the period 2020-2024, DG ENV will fully transform its external web presence, streamlining content in a new multilingual format that puts users first. Press releases, interviews and editorials will be used to communicate EU environment policy in a simple and engaging way, often tailored to local audiences. Social media networks (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) will be increasingly used. They are the most rapidly growing media used by European citizens and stakeholders, and their interactive nature enables direct feedback from them



Collaboration with the **Green Spider Network**, formed by the heads of communication from EU environment ministries and national agencies, will continue in its double role of multipliers and co-creators. Engagement with citizens will also continue, in particular via

¹¹ SEA and EIA directives.

“CitizEnv”. **CitizEnv** proposes participatory workshops with citizens in all Member States on environment-related issues, with a special focus on younger audiences, facilitated by native speaker DG ENV colleagues. The results of the CitizEnv process serve as an input to policy initiatives launched by DG ENV, giving European citizens an additional access to the policy decision-making process.

DG ENV also envisages a **publications programme** closely tailored to Commission priorities in all official languages. E-publications will be favoured as well as games to pass the messages to younger citizens.

Major **campaigns** will be launched to raise awareness about key political priorities most relevant to citizens. **EU Green Week**, the DG’s flagship communication event, will be organised annually, each year putting the spotlight on a different priority. In the wake of the pandemic, **virtual reality** technologies and hybrid formats will be further used to combine an element of physical presence with virtual and interactive events, facilitating broader public participation.



Monitoring performance

*Ensuring that legislation is fit for purpose and avoids unnecessary administrative burden is key to better governance and implementation. DG ENV will monitor the proportion of legislative revisions that include **burden reduction measures**, (result indicator 5.1)¹²*

*The results of **enforcement action** will provide an indication of both the reduction of key implementation gaps and the effectiveness of enforcement action across sectors (result indicators 5.2 to 5.5). Enforcement of environmental **governance legislation** is also one of the DG’s Key Performance Indicators.*

*Cities participation in the **European Green Capital and Green Leaf** awards will reflect efforts towards urban sustainability (result indicator 5.6).*

Specific Objective 6-International: Global uptake of the environmental objectives of the European Green Deal is stimulated through participation in multilateral agreements, institutions and fora, EU accession negotiations, engagement with third countries and trade.

The EGD underlines that **environmental degradation is a global challenge** requiring a global response, stipulating that ambitious environment, climate and energy policies should be promoted across the world.

The environment and health of EU citizens are, for instance, affected by pollution in neighbouring countries or by chemicals in imported products. There are **global cause-and-effect relationships** that require attention. Deforestation aggravates global climate

¹² When reporting on this indicator, DG ENV will provide a global assessment of burden reduction by considering all legislative revisions proposed by the DG. Detail by specific policy objectives, where relevant, will also be provided, through the DG annual activity reports

change and biodiversity loss, while in itself linked to EU consumption. The shift of industrial production to emerging economies with less efficient production structures, combined with global population growth, increases the demand for natural resources and accelerates climate change, pollution, deforestation, biodiversity loss and ecosystem depletion. Thus, no matter how robust the EU's internal environment legislation is, by itself it cannot provide the high level of protection of environment and health the EU Treaty mandates.

Tackling the pressures on the EU's environment requires **global outreach**. Improving environmental management in third countries and regions, starting with our neighbourhood, has direct and positive impacts on EU citizens and provides opportunities for our companies while these, in turn, can play an important role in greening the global economy by providing goods and services made to highest environmental standards. At the same time, addressing global environment challenges is an integral part of the EU's engagement to promote global stability, security and equitable growth that addresses the root causes of migration and leaves no one behind.

In the period 2020-2024, DG ENV's external engagement will be guided by the **systemic approach** of the SDGs and the policy priorities of this strategic plan – promoting the circular economy, protecting nature and biodiversity, sustainable chemicals and global approaches to foster a zero pollution ambition internationally, in particular to curb terrestrial and marine pollution (under specific objectives 1, 2 and 3). It will aim at strengthening the role of the EU in the multilateral context and expand outreach to third countries, including in the framework of Green Deal Diplomacy. **External communication** action will contribute to highlight the global role of Europe as a standard setter for the environment.



Multilaterally, action for the environment will be promoted throughout the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and other fora. Collaboration with the UN Environment Programme will help to broaden the understanding of shared environmental challenges, develop joint approaches and promote solutions that have worked well at EU level. Strengthening global environment governance will be a crosscutting priority, addressing identified gaps and making the most of political opportunities such as the 50th anniversary of the Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment in 2022.

Bilaterally, environment policy dialogues with third countries will continue and where possible be expanded. DG ENV will work with the European External Action Service and the external relations DGs to underpin policy dialogues with concrete cooperation activities such as development cooperation, technical expert exchanges, joint seminars and study visits.

In line with the political guidelines, **Africa** and **Europe's neighbourhood**, including the **enlargement** process, will be a special focus of attention. This will *inter alia* involve promoting the EU-Africa Green Transition Partnership proposed in the new Strategy with Africa, development assistance and a pro-active circular economy outreach. In the EU enlargement area, beside accession negotiations the DG will support the implementation of the **Green Agenda for the Western Balkans**.

In addition, international engagement will continue in structured dialogues with **strategic partners and emerging economies** (e.g. China, India, Japan, Brazil, Mexico, Indonesia, South Africa, USA and Canada). By virtue of their contribution to global environmental challenges and solutions, and their global role, these are indispensable partners.

Another thematic focus will be on ensuring that the highest standards of environmental protection are upheld in EU **Free Trade Agreements** (FTA), where DG ENV will, together with DG TRADE, concentrate on effective negotiation and implementation of the relevant **Trade and Sustainable Development** chapters.

The **COVID-19 crisis** has put a particular strain on the resources of poor countries, adding further urgency to global environment policy engagement, both multilaterally and bilaterally. In line with the upcoming Recovery Corporate Communication campaign, DG ENV's outreach activities will aim to **support a global green recovery** seeking to convince third countries to adopt recovery strategies and policies that are oriented toward fundamental transformation to sustainable production and consumption systems worldwide.



Monitoring performance

DG ENV will monitor **global progress towards a circular economy** (result indicator 6.1), fundamental for the ecological transition and the achievement of many environmental and sustainable development goals globally.

Across sectors, the monitoring framework will focus on progress made in the integration of environmental standards in **enlargement and neighbourhood countries** and in **bilateral and regional relations** (result indicators 6.3 and 6.4). These are qualitative indicators and monitoring will be based on DG ENV's analysis.

D. Key performance indicators

It is challenging to develop a framework that, based on existing indicators, would take account of the various dimensions of the environment while remaining accurate and meaningful. In connection with the 8th EAP, work is under way to develop a more complete environment monitoring framework with indicators covering the state of the environment, pressures on it and the result of EU intervention.

In the meanwhile, the DG will use the following KPIs to track progress towards its policy objectives, as set out in this strategic plan:

- **Municipal waste generation and treatment** as an indicator of a more sustainable use of materials in the circular economy (result indicator 1.3).
- The percentage of **terrestrial and marine protected areas**, as a measure of efforts to put biodiversity and ecosystems in the path to restoration (result indicator 2.1).
- Exposure of urban population to **air pollution**, with a focus on fine particulate matter (result indicator 3.1).
- Compliance with **governance principles** in environmental legislation as an indicator of a strengthened governance framework (result indicator 5.5).
- Estimated **risk at closure** expressed as the percentage of relevant expenditure at risk of mismanagement at closure, reflecting the degree of sound financial management achieved (corporate indicator on page 31).

PART 2. Modernising the administration

President von der Leyen, in her political guidelines, announced that the Commission would take the necessary steps to modernise its administration and ensure that the Institution has the appropriate financial, human and institutional resources to deliver the best results for Europeans.

In line with this ambition, a set of shared objectives was established at corporate level, to be pursued by all the Commission services in the areas of human resources, financial and fraud management, digital transformation and environmental management. These objectives, and the indicators to measure the progress made, are embedded in the text below, complemented by narratives explaining how the DG intends to achieve the expected results.

As a modern public administration, the Commission implements an internal control framework inspired by the highest international standards. The Commission's system covers all the principles of internal control identified in the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission 2013 Internal Control framework, including financial control, risk management, human resource management, communication and the safeguarding and protection of information. DG ENV has established an internal control system tailored to its particular characteristics and circumstances and regularly assesses its implementation and overall functioning. This assessment is based on indicators, the most strategic of which are listed in this strategic plan.

A. Human resource management

Environmental policies are at the core of the European Green Deal (EGD), the first ambition of the present Commission. DG ENV will be in charge of an important number of new measures of the EGD, and will support other DGs to integrate environmental considerations into the activities that have a higher impact on the environment.

Human resources will be under considerable pressure, as a result of the additional workload and of the high level of public interest in these areas. Extra resources maybe available to implement the EGD, but the DG will first of all rely on the staff motivation to meet the challenges of this critical period. In order to ensure the effective management of human resources and to optimise the capacity to deliver on priorities, the DG will develop a **local HR strategy** with a medium to long-term outlook (3–5 years) consistent with the overall corporate HR strategy.

The DG will continue to **allocate resources** as efficiently as possible, building on the recent advances in reducing overheads and administrative support. An internal review of working methods is underway including a better distribution of assistants across units. A new training policy will be implemented to support this process and maximise skills, knowledge and motivation.

Talent management encompasses many of the HR initiatives in future years. The DG will continue to offer useful programmes in the field of learning and development to help staff to develop skills and knowledge that contribute to the success of the DG's work. Promoting mobility will allow staff to renew motivation and move to areas where they can best display their talents.



The DG has traditionally a high level of engagement, as regularly shown in the staff surveys. Absence rates, for example, are lower than the Commission average. Nevertheless, the DG will continue to emphasise the importance of well-being with activities aimed at prevention of toxic stress and burnout.

Female representation in management has been well above the Commission average for a number of years. The DG is committed to ensuring that the gender balance targets are fully attained at all management levels.

DG ENV attaches great importance to **internal communication**. The DG's communication strategy will be based on three main pillars.

- engagement (create a sense of belonging and ownership);
- better cooperation (facilitate dissemination and exchange of information and promote new efficient ways of working together);

Getting the big picture (help staff to see how their work contributes to achieving the objectives of the DG and the Commission overall).



Objective: DG ENV employs a competent and engaged workforce and contributes to gender equality at all levels of management to effectively deliver on the Commission's priorities and core business

Indicator 1: Number and percentage of first female appointments to middle management positions

Source of data: Commission data (to be provided by DG HR)

Baseline (female representation in management) (1 December 2019)	Target [assigned by the Commission] (2024)
50%	+ 1

Indicator 2: DG ENV staff engagement index

Source of data: Commission staff survey

Baseline (2019)	Target (2024)
72%]	74%

B. Sound financial management

DG ENV is committed to promote and maintain sound and efficient management of financial resources. This is particularly important in the context of the multiple challenges that the new **LIFE programme** will face in the coming period:

- An expected significant increase of its envelope, when compared with the 2014-2020 period (55% following the revised MFF proposal from 27 May 2020);
- The integration of a new sub-programme on Clean Energy transition coming from Horizon 2020;
- A new Executive Agency to which the bulk of the future LIFE programme will be delegated.

Taking into account the lessons learned from the previous delegation to EASME, a significant amount of time and resources will be devoted to build up good working relations with the new executive Agency, to fine-tune procedures at the start of the new programme and ensure business continuity.

For the part of the budget that the DG will still manage, mostly **procurement**, the DG will strive to maintain effective internal control, risk management and accounting systems, so that **reasonable assurance** can be given that resources assigned to the activities of the DG are used for their intended purpose, in accordance with the principles of sound financial management. Cost-effectiveness is also key, and the DG is keen to implement fully the digitalisation (paperless workflows, e-procurement tools, etc.), and to make use of any simplification opportunities (lump sums, etc.).



Due to the long lifespan of LIFE projects, DG ENV is still managing a **legacy of projects** funded under the pre-2014 LIFE. In relation to these projects, a team of ex-post auditors maintains the audit effort and calculates the error rate reported in the DG annual activity reports, which is consistently below the materiality threshold of 2%. It is expected that in a couple of years this legacy will diminish, subsequently the ex-post audits will not have a viable sampling population of in-house projects to carry on and the error rate will be based on the Executive Agency's assessment, due to the importance and magnitude of the delegation the Agency will be receiving.

DG ENV devotes the highest attention to the work of the **European Court of Auditors** (ECA) and makes all efforts to ensure a smooth audit process with correct and timely follow-up of recommendations. This concerns the audits of financial transactions, as well as the "performance audits" in which ECA assesses different EU policies. Performance audits have recently increased and will remain a key area of work in DG ENV, as ECA's interest on environment is unlikely to decrease.

Objective: The authorising officer by delegation has reasonable assurance that resources have been used in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that cost-effective controls are in place which give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of underlying transactions

Indicator: Estimated risk at closure

Source of data: DG Annual Activity Reports

Baseline (2019)	Target (2024)
0,4% of relevant expenditure	< 2% of relevant expenditure

C. Fraud risk management

In 2020, DG ENV will finalise a new anti-fraud strategy covering the period 2020-2024. Following the 2019 Commission **Anti-Fraud Strategy**, the DG strategy focuses on protecting the EU's financial interests from fraud, corruption and other intentional irregularities as well as risk of serious wrongdoings inside the EU's institutions and bodies.

The DG anti-fraud strategy will be applicable to all types of expenditure, as well as to non-spending activities and policy making, and cover both external (e.g. by grant beneficiaries, tenderers or contractors) and internal fraud (by EU staff). The proposed measures will cover all stages of the anti-fraud cycle (prevention/detection, investigation/monitoring, correction/sanction/recovery), and will include actions already ongoing place as well as new actions that will be implemented in the upcoming years.

In line with OLAF's methodology, DG ENV's anti-fraud strategy is based on an assessment of fraud risks. Some of the key fraud risks identified were overpricing by service providers, leakage of internal information to external stakeholders and applicants to financial procedures and non-consistent implementation of Intellectual Property Rights. The new anti-fraud Strategy contains a set of five objectives fully aligned with the corporate Anti-Fraud Strategy (CAFS) and an action plan including eight action jays been agreed. For all the key fraud risks identified, at least one corresponding action is foreseen. A set of indicators will be used to measure the achievement of the objectives.

The DG ENV anti-fraud strategy contributes to the implementation of the key CAFS objectives no 1, 2, 3 and 4 as well as it is aligned with the CAFS action plan and its actions 5, 13, 16, 20, 53, 56 and 60.

The DG anti-fraud strategy will be reviewed in 2024 to take into account any newly identified fraud risks, the effectiveness of implemented mitigation measures and any potential developments stemming from the mid-term review of the Commission's Anti-Fraud Strategy, expected the same year.

Objective: The risk of fraud is minimised through the application of effective anti-fraud measures and the implementation of the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy¹³ aimed at the prevention, detection and correction¹⁴ of fraud

Indicator: Implementation of the actions included in DG ENV's anti-fraud strategy over the whole strategic plan lifecycle (2020-2024)

Source of data: DG ENV's annual activity report, DG ENV's anti-fraud strategy, OLAF reporting

Baseline (2020)	Target (2024)
60% (considering that all anti-fraud measures in the current Anti-Fraud Strategy have been implemented and continue to be applicable)	100% of anti-fraud measures in the new Anti-Fraud Strategy implemented on time

D. Digital transformation and information management

President von der Leyen has made of the **digital transition** one of the ambitions of its political guidelines, confirmed as a cornerstone of the post COVID-19 recovery plan. The Commission is determined to lead by example and evolve towards a digitally transformed, user-focused and data-driven administration. The Digital Strategy adopted in 2018 (DS)¹⁵ will underpin the development of digital solutions also under the present mandate.

In the upcoming years, DG ENV will fully implement the DS, iteratively aligning existing applications to its eleven principles, and using these as guidance for all new developments. Corporate solutions, reusable components and infrastructure, where applicable, will be re-used.

Based on EU environment legislation, the DG provides and operates a number of EU support systems, in collaboration with Member States. These too will be developed, or evolved, to align with the DS principles, and to meet the commitments of the Tallinn Declaration and the European Interoperability Framework.

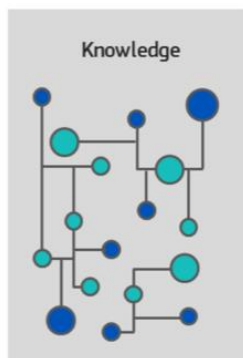
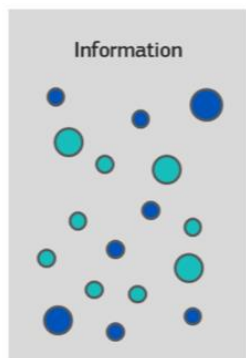
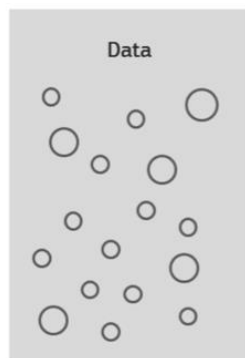
IT governance will continue to be a central process, in line with the Commission governance framework and to generate business value from all IT investments. A corporate IT committee will oversee investments to ensure that resources are efficiently used and business needs supported by efficient, secure and resilient communication and information systems. Full compliance with personal data protection rules will also be ensured.

¹³ Communication from the Commission 'Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy: enhanced action to protect the EU budget', COM(2019) 176 of 29 April 2019 – 'the CAFS Communication' – and the accompanying action plan, SWD(2019) 170 – 'the CAFS Action Plan'.

¹⁴ Correction of fraud is an umbrella term, which notably refers to the recovery of amounts unduly spent and to administrative sanctions.

¹⁵ [European Commission Digital Strategy](#) (C(2018)7118)

In the context of the **EU Open Data portal**, DG ENV has shared its inventory of data assets and has established several partnerships with JRC, ESTAT and EEA to manage part of these data sets. Thanks to these, 60% of the DG data assets is already being managed



according to the DS guidelines. The data assets managed within the DG, however, has not reached the same maturity and further efforts will be required for these assets. An action plan on data, information and knowledge will be adopted by the DG Knowledge

Governance Board, and include the regular review of the management of data assets.

Data sharing and trusted digital technologies for **knowledge co-creation** need to be a common practice to reap the full potential of data in support of the policy priorities of this strategic plan, including the shift towards a more systemic approach and the integration of environmental considerations into other policy areas. A main goal will be to facilitate complementing sectorial information (e.g. water, biodiversity, waste or air quality data) with other data sources (socio-economic data in particular). Leveraging corporate data management capabilities and technologies will be crucial, and help advancing towards an EU-wide open data ecosystem with increased usability of open data.

While the first objective will remain that of securing, for DG staff, easy access to the information needed for policy development and implementation, these activities will also contribute to set up the common EGD data space. It will furthermore contribute to the development of open, borderless, data-driven public services and accelerate the emergence of a global data economy.

Implementation of the strategy on **Data, information and knowledge**¹⁶, will also continue under this mandate and aim, as a priority, to manage these assets in a more open and effective manner.



The **Environment Knowledge Community**, created in 2015 with the European Environment Agency and other knowledge partners, plays a key role in developing the DG knowledge base. Since 2019, it contributes to implementing the local DG's knowledge strategy, which also includes a set of actions to cover data aspects. These aim, *inter alia*, to ensure that data is meaningful for policy makers and contributes to enhance the DG's knowledge base.

Document and records management will remain a key priority, so that work-related documents and information are easy to find, retrieve and share, and are preserved in

¹⁶ [Data, Information and Knowledge Management at the European Commission \(C\(2016\) 6626\)](#)

accordance with their informational, administrative, legal or historical value. Training will remain an important element of the DG’s approach. Local training and coaching sessions on document management and information security will be organised. The DG will also encourage staff participation in Commission’s centrally-organised in-depth trainings.

Personal Data Protection

DG ENV continues to implement the Data Protection Action Plan to comply with the Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2018/1725, taking the necessary steps in compliance and awareness raising.

All personal data processing operations for which DG ENV is responsible will have detailed records of processing, so that the DG demonstrates compliance with its data protection obligations towards the persons (data subjects) whose personal data are processed. Data subject rights are at the centre of the Commission’s data protection efforts. In line with this priority, the DG will systematically provide transparent and easily understandable information to data subjects in accordance with the Regulation and with corporate guidelines and strategies.

Local training sessions on Personal Data Protection will be organised, and the DG will also encourage participation in the in-depth trainings organised by the Data Protection Officer of the Commission.

Objective: DG ENV is using innovative, trusted digital solutions for better policy-shaping, information management and administrative processes to forge a truly digitally transformed, user-focused and data-driven Commission		
Indicator 1: Degree of implementation of the digital strategy principles by the most important IT solutions		
Source of data: DG ENV		
Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
50% Average of 3 most expensive solutions	65% Average of 3 most expensive solutions	85% Average of 3 most expensive solutions
Indicator 2: Percentage of DG ENV’s key data assets for which corporate principles for data governance have been implemented		
Source of data: DG ENV		
Baseline (2019)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
60%	50%	80%
Indicator 3: Percentage of staff attending awareness raising activities on data protection compliance		

Source of data: DG ENV		
Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
20% of DG ENV staff followed local training in 2018] 100% of DG ENV controllers followed central training organised by DPO	40% of staff 100% of controllers	80% of staff 100% of controllers

E. Sound environmental management

As part of its commitment to the sustainable use of resources, the European Commission is determined to set an example by reducing the environmental impact of its own activities, building on ten years of experience implementing EMAS, the Environmental Management and Audit Scheme.



In 2019, an EMAS Global Action Plan was adopted to help meet the Commission’s environmental performance targets, which DG ENV is fully committed to achieve. Any of the actions in the global plan have been ongoing for years and a few new actions are launched, such as the “one point waste collection”, which entails the removal of individual dustbins from the offices from 2020. More ambitious targets will be set to reduce the consumption of electricity, paper and water. Together with the OIB, DG ENV is exploring ways to reduce food waste and packaging. In June 2020, under the title “Greening the DG” a collaborative webinar presented these actions and enabled staff to propose new ideas to green the common work place together. Concrete actions resulting from the suggestions collected will be discussed and announced through the DG annual management plans. The establishment of guidance for the implementation of the green public procurement (GPP) criteria in DG ENV’s own procurement (studies and services) will be envisaged.

In October 2020, the DG will actively participate in the voluntary week: “Green volunteering actions” to coincide with EU Green Week in October 2020. It will coordinate the action called ‘A zero pollution Europe’, which involves local clean-ups / litter removal, working in collaboration with *Bruxelles Environnement* and *Bruxelles Propreté*.

Objective: DG ENV takes full account of its environmental impact in all its actions and actively promotes measures to reduce the related day-to-day impact of the administration

Indicator 1: Environmental performance in the Commission

This indicator looks at percentage reductions compared to 2014 levels. It gives the weighted average for eight Commission sites participating in the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) on specific core parameters. The sites are Commission buildings in Brussels and Luxembourg, as well as JRC sites Geel (Belgium), Petten (the Netherlands), Seville (Spain), Karlsruhe (Germany), and Ispra (Italy), along with DG SANTE at Grange (Ireland)

Source of data: [Environmental Statement 2018 results \(pg. 23\)](#)

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
<i>Energy consumption of buildings (MWh / person): -8.8%</i>	-5.2%	Achieve greater reduction
<i>Water use (m³ / person): -9.5%</i>	-5.4%	Achieve greater reduction
<i>Office paper consumption (sheets / person / day): -32%</i>	-34%	Achieve greater reduction
<i>CO₂ emissions from buildings (tonnes / person): -24%</i>	-5.1%	Achieve greater reduction
<i>Waste generation (tonnes / person): -15%</i>	-9.7%	Achieve greater reduction

ANNEX: Policy performance tables

Impact Indicators

General objective: A European Green Deal		
1. Impact indicator: Resource productivity		
<p>Explanation: This indicator looks at the sustainability of growth. Resource productivity is defined as gross domestic product (GDP in EUR) divided by domestic material consumption (kg). Domestic material consumption measures the total amount of materials directly used by an economy. It is calculated as the annual quantity of raw materials extracted from the domestic territory of the focal economy, plus all physical imports, minus all physical export. Index: 2000 = 100</p> <p>Source of the data: Eurostat resource productivity statistics (Eurostat online data code: sdg_12_20)</p>		
Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
132	Increase	Increase
2. Impact indicator: Common birds population		
<p>Explanation: This indicator shows trends in the abundance of common birds over time across their European distribution. It is a proxy for the state of biodiversity and the integrity of ecosystems, reflecting wide-ranging pressures for instance from agriculture, fisheries, energy and transport sectors. Index: 1990 = 100</p> <p>Source of data: European Birds Census Council; Birdlife; Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; Czech Society for Ornithology (Eurostat online data code: sdg_15_60)</p>		
Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
93.45	Curtail biodiversity loss	Curtail biodiversity loss
3. Impact indicator: Consumption of hazardous chemicals		
<p>Explanation: The indicator measures the volume of aggregated consumption of chemicals, expressed in million tonnes. There are two sub-categories of hazardousness which overlap by definition: hazardous to human health and hazardous to the environment</p> <p>Source of the data: Eurostat (Eurostat online data code: sdg_12_10)</p>		
Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
<i>Hazardous to health:</i> 219.8 million tonnes <i>Hazardous to the environment:</i> 75.8 million tonnes	Decrease Decrease	Decrease Decrease
4. Impact indicator: Years of life lost due to fine particulate matter in the air		
<p>Explanation: The indicator shows the social impacts of population exposure to PM_{2.5}. It estimates the sum of years of potential life lost due to premature death. It is based on official data on PM_{2.5} concentrations and modelling to estimate the health impacts (in terms of cardiovascular mortality and morbidity, as well as chronic health conditions, including neurodevelopment disorders, poor cognitive function, diabetes, and respiratory diseases)</p> <p>Source of the data: European Environmental Agency report on air quality in Europe (most recent European Environmental Agency Report No 10/2019, p. 66, p. 69)</p>		
Baseline (2016) ¹⁷	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
3 848 000	Decrease	Decrease

¹⁷ EU28 data. EU27_2020 not available

5. Impact indicator: Circular materials use rate

Explanation: The indicator measures the share of material recovered and fed back into the economy - thus saving extraction of primary raw materials - in overall material use. The circular material use rate is defined as the ratio of the circular use of materials to the overall material use

Source of the data: Eurostat (Eurostat online data code: [sdg_12_41](#))

Methodology for calculating the indicator: Circular material use rate [calculation method](#)

Baseline (2016)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2025)
11.2%	Increase	Increase

Result indicators

Specific objective 1 Circular Economy: The EU economy is more circular and uses natural resources and products more sustainably Related to spending programme(s): LIFE

Result indicator 1.1: Number of EU Ecolabel products

Explanation: The indicator monitors the total number of products (goods and services) currently awarded with the EU Ecolabel, (Regulation EC 66/2010), issued by the Competent Bodies of the EEA countries. The EU Ecolabel identify products having a reduced environmental impact and can be used as a proxy for more environmentally sustainable products. The unit of measurement is the number of products awarded with the EU Ecolabel.

Source of data: DG ENV [\[https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/facts-and-figures.html\]](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecolabel/facts-and-figures.html)

Baseline (2019)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
77.358 products	Increase	Increase

Result indicator 1.2: Eco-innovation index

Explanation: The eco-innovation index is composed of 16 indicators grouped in five thematic areas (inputs, activities, outputs, resource efficiency outcomes and socio-economic outcomes). It shows how individual Member States perform in different dimensions of eco-innovation compared to the EU average and presents the EU average evolution over time. This performance framework looks at the evolution of the EU average, measured as with reference to 2015 as index point 100.

Source of data: DG ENV / Eco-Innovation Observatory (EIO) [\[EIO Indicators\]](#)

(For the baseline: [EIO Brief 2018](#))

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
124 Index 2015 = 100	Increase	Increase

Result indicator 1.3: Municipal waste generation and treatment

Explanation: Municipal waste is generated by households, commercial activities and other sources whose activities are similar to those of households and commercial enterprises. It reflects the amount of municipal waste generated per capita and is measured in Kg/person.

Treatment of waste is defined on the basis of the treatment operations as set out in the Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC. The indicator measures treatment as a % of total waste generated.

Source of data: Eurostat [Eurostat online data code: [env_wasmun](#)]

Baseline (2019)	Interim milestone	Target (2024)
Generation: 489 kg/person	N/A	Generation: Reduce
Recycling & composting: 47,8%		Recycling & composting: 50%
Incineration: 27,8%		Recycling & composting: 65%*
Landfilling: 22,6%		Reduction of landfilling to 10%*
<i>*Targets defined for 2035 by the Waste Framework Directive</i>		
Result indicator 1.4: :Export of waste outside the EU		
Explanation: Many waste streams are valuable resources as they are an important source of raw materials. Therefore, measuring the export of waste for recovery is an indicator on the value kept within the EU, and therefore the European raw materials sector, Measurement in tonnes of waste.		
Source of data: Eurostat [Eurostat online data code: cei_srm020] Static bookmark		
Baseline (2019)	Interim milestone	Target (2024)
25 467 976 tonnes	Reduce	Reduce
Result indicator 1.5: Proportion of proposed legislative revisions that include burden reduction measures		
Explanation: The indicator measures how the Commission upholds its commitment to ensure that proposals for legislative revisions incorporate burden reduction measures, in the broader context of REFIT programme and One-In, One-Out approach. The indicator shows how many proposed legislative revisions out of the total, for each relevant specific objective, include measures that concretely reduce burden.		
Source of data: DG ENV analysis		
Baseline	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
N/A	Positive trend	Positive trend

Specific Objective 2: Biodiversity and natural ecosystems in the EU are put on the path to recovery by stepping up the protection and restoration of nature Related to spending programme: LIFE

Result indicator 2.1: Terrestrial and marine areas protected under Natura2000¹⁸

Explanation: The indicator monitors the surface of EU land, oceans and seas protected under Natura 2000. Natura 2000 is a network of core breeding and resting sites for rare and threatened species, and some rare natural habitat types which are protected in their own right. The extent of the areas protected is an indication on how species and habitats can be preserved from multiple pressures. The measurement unit is Km².

Source of data: Eurostat [[Eurostat data code env bio 1](#)]

Baseline (2019)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)

¹⁸ An indicator is currently under development by the European Environment Agency covering protected EU areas beyond Natura 2000 sites, to help monitor the BDS target of 30% increase by 2030.

Land: 763,986 Km ²	Increase	Increase and contribute to the
Oceans and seas: 441,001 Km ²		30% increase of EU land, oceans and seas protected by 2030

Result indicator 2.2: Grassland butterfly index

Explanation: The indicator is based on the population trends of 17 butterfly species in 19 European countries. These butterflies are considered to be representative of trends observed for most other terrestrial pollinator insects and are useful indicators of the general health of ecosystems. Their decline indicates that Europe's grassland habitats are shrinking. The indicator is an index with 1990 as base year.

Source of data: EEA [<https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/indicators/land-take-3/assessment>]

Baseline	Interim milestone	Target
(2017)	(2022)	(2024)
62.9	Increase	Increase
Index 100 in 1990		

Result indicator 2.3: Net land take

Explanation: Land take by the expansion of residential areas and construction sites is the main cause of the increase in the coverage of urban land at the European level. Agricultural zones and, to a lesser extent, forests and semi-natural and natural areas, are disappearing in favour of the development of artificial surfaces. This affects biodiversity since it decreases habitats, the living space of a number of species, and fragments the landscapes that support and connect them. Soil sealing also affects the water cycle and leads to the heat island effect in cities. The net land take concept combines land take with land return to non-artificial land categories (re-cultivation). The measurement unit is Km²/year

Source of data: EEA [https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/daviz/european-grassland-butterfly-indicator-3#tab-chart_6]

Baseline	Interim milestone	Target
(2012-2018 EU 28)		(2024)
438.94 km ² /year	Reduce	0 km ² /year (No net land take)

Specific objective 3: Citizens and natural ecosystems are better protected from environmental pressures and risks to health as a result of Europe's zero-pollution ambition and measures for a toxic-free environment

Related to spending programme(s):
LIFE

Result indicator 3.1: Percentage of urban population exposed to air pollution

Explanation: - Percentage of urban population exposed to air pollution above EU air quality standards:

- Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) concentrations above the EU limit value (i.e. 50 µg PM₁₀/m³ averaged over 24 hours) on more than 35 days a year
- Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) concentrations above the EU limit value (i.e. 40 µg NO₂/m³ averaged over a year) during a calendar year

Source of data: EEA [https://www.eea.europa.eu/ds_resolveuid/IND-34-en]

Baseline	Interim milestone	Target
(2017)	(2022)	(2024)
Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) 17.2% Urban population exposed (i.e. above EU limit value, on more than 35 days per year)	Reduce	Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) 0 % Urban population exposed (i.e. above EU limit value, on more than 35 days per year)

Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) 6.5% Urban population exposed (i.e. above EU limit value, on an annual average)	Reduce	Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) 0% Urban population exposed (i.e. above EU limit value, on an annual average)
<p>Result indicator 3.2: Percentage of population in urban areas affected by high noise levels</p> <p>Explanation: Percentage of population in urban areas estimated to be affected by noise levels above 55 dB Lden (day, evening and night period of exposure) from transportation - road, rail and aircraft noise</p> <p>Source of data: European Environment Agency</p>		
Baseline (2019)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
More than 91 million people	Reduce	Reduce and approach WHO values ¹⁹
<p>Result indicator 3.3: Biochemical oxygen demand</p> <p>Explanation: Biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) gives an indication of organic matter in rivers' water. It measures the amount of dissolved oxygen needed by aerobic microorganisms to decompose organic substances present in a given water sample at a certain temperature over a specific period (expressed in milligrams of oxygen consumed per litre). The greater the BOD, the lower the amount of dissolved oxygen available for higher animals such as fish. Organic pollution in rivers affects negatively aquatic ecosystems, and the quality of water used for human consumption [Measured in mg/L]</p> <p>Source of data: Eurostat online data code: sdg_06_30</p>		
Baseline (2017)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
2.04 five-day mg/L	Decrease	Decrease
<p>Result indicator 3.4: Groundwaters polluted by nitrates</p> <p>Explanation: This indicator measures the percentage of groundwater monitoring sites with nitrates' concentration (NO₃-mg/L) over 50 mg/L for groundwater. Increased concentrations are caused by anthropogenic sources such as nitrogen based fertilisers used in agriculture, livestock practices or septic tanks. High levels can pose a threat to human health (e.g. when groundwater is used for drinking purposes) and to dependent ecosystems.</p> <p>Source of data: European Commission reports on the implementation of the Nitrates Directive: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-nitrates/reports.html</p>		
Baseline (2018*)	Interim milestone (2021*)	Target (2024*)
13.2% Groundwater monitoring points > 50 mg/L *Reporting period 2012-2015	Reduce *Reporting period 2016-2019	Reduce *Reporting period 2020-2023
<p>Result indicator 3.5: Industrial pollution intensity</p> <p>Explanation: Provides a measure of Industrial emissions to air and water. This indicator is in two parts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The first aggregates the estimated damage costs of reported emissions to air from large industrial installations and normalises these to take account fo economic activity [measurement in EUR of damage in EUR by Gross Value Added (GVA)]. - The second aggregates pollutant emissions to water and displays this mass normalised for overall economic activity [measures in Kg per million EUR GVA]. <p>Source of data: E-PRTR for emission data /Eurostat for economic data and EEA for air pollution damage costs – DG ENV elaboration.</p>		

¹⁹ WHO values released on 10/10/2018: below 53dB (road), 53dB (railway), 45dB (aircraft)

Baseline (2017)	Interim milestone	Target (2024)
EU large industry air pollution damage costs intensity (EUR damage per EUR GVA) EUR 0.043	N/A	To further prevent or reduce environmental industrial pollution
EU large industry water pollution intensity (kg per million EUR GVA): 2.37 Kg		
Result indicator 3.6: Proportion of proposed legislative revisions that include burden reduction measures		
Explanation: The indicator measures how the Commission upholds its commitment to ensure that proposals for legislative revisions incorporate burden reduction measures, in the broader context of REFIT programme and One-In, One-Out approach. The indicator shows how many proposed legislative revisions out of the total, for each relevant specific objective, include measures that concretely reduce burden.		
Source of data: DG ENV analysis		
Baseline	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
N/A	Positive trend	Positive trend

Specific objective 4: Environmental concerns are integrated, and biodiversity standards mainstreamed, across EU policies, investments and finance, through existing consultation mechanisms and a proactive approach to coordination	Related to spending programme: LIFE	
Result indicator 4.1: Structural funds interventions		
Explanation: Structural funds provide the majority of the funds available to finance environmental projects and infrastructure. Implementing these funds is a key integration target for DG ENV.		
Source of data: DG REGIO https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/		
Baseline (2018) ²⁰	Interim milestone	Target (2024) ²¹
Additional waste recycling capacity (CO17): 755 400 tonnes/year	NA	Additional waste recycling capacity (CO17): 4 793 500 tonnes/year
Surface area of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status (CO23): 2.8 million hectares		Surface area of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status (CO23): 8.5 million hectares
Total surface area of rehabilitated land (CO22):		Total surface area of rehabilitated land (CO22):

²⁰ Baselines for common EFSI indicators (COXX) are the latest available figures from 2018

²¹ While the target date corresponds to the end of the current strategic plan, all targets for common indicators (COXX) are set for programmes of the 2014-2020 programming period, the delivery of which will extend to 2023. The figures are rounded

<p>583 hectares</p> <p>Population benefiting from flood protection measures (C020)</p> <p>4.1 million people</p> <p>Additional population served by waste water collection and treatment (C019):</p> <p>1.9 million people</p>		<p>13 000 hectares</p> <p>Population benefiting from flood protection measures(C020)</p> <p>16.5 million people</p> <p>Additional population served by waste water collection and treatment (C019):</p> <p>17.7 million people</p>
<p>Result indicator 4.2: EAFRD support for environment and climate action</p>		
<p>Explanation: The percentage of EAFRD payments related to environmental and climate provides a very general estimate of the level of financial efforts of the Rural Development policy to support environmental operations.</p>		
<p>Source of data: DG AGRI</p>		
<p>Baseline (2014-2020)</p>	<p>Interim milestone (2022)</p>	<p>Target (2024)</p>
<p>51,3 % (not cumulative, total for both periods 2007-2013 and 2014-2020)</p>	<p>Maintain or increase</p>	<p>Maintain or increase</p>
<p>Result indicator 4.3: Structural funds supporting the marine environment</p>		
<p>Explanation: Estimated percentage of funds spent in activities related to the protection of the marine environment, in particular its biodiversity and marine protected areas such as Natura 2000 sites, and the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources and to further define the boundaries of the sustainability of human activities that have an impact on the marine environment, in accordance with the objectives of achieving and maintaining a good environmental status as required by Directive 2008/56/EC.</p>		
<p>Source of data: DG ENV Analysis</p>		
<p>Baseline (2014-2020)</p>	<p>Interim milestone (2022)</p>	<p>Target (2024)</p>
<p>10% (of the directly managed European Maritime and Fisheries Funds - EMFF)</p>	<p>Maintain or increase</p>	<p>Maintain or increase</p>
<p>Result indicator 4.4: Share of environmental taxes</p>		
<p>Explanation: The share of environmental taxes (energy, transport, pollution/resources) represents the degree of environmental integration into finance. It is measured as the percentage of environmental taxes of the total revenue annually.</p>		
<p>Source of data: Eurostat [online code name sdg_17_50]</p>		
<p>Baseline (2018)</p>	<p>Interim milestone (2022)</p>	<p>Target (2024)</p>
<p>5.99%</p>	<p>Increase</p>	<p>Increase</p>

Specific objective 5: There is an enabling framework for implementation based on strong governance and enforcement action, supported by advanced knowledge and digital technologies, close collaboration with cities and citizens' engagement

Related to spending programme: LIFE

Result indicator 5.1: Proportion of proposed legislative revisions that include burden reduction measures

Explanation: The indicator measures how the Commission upholds its commitment to ensure that proposals for legislative revisions incorporate burden reduction measures, in the broader context of REFIT programme and One-In, One-Out approach. The indicator shows how many proposed legislative revisions out of the total, for each relevant specific objective, include measures that concretely reduce burden.

Source of data: DG ENV analysis

Baseline	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
N/A	Positive trend	Positive trend

Result indicator 5.2: Compliance with EU landfilling rules

Explanation: The indicator shows the progress made by Member States in eradicating illegal or substandard landfills, which is a basic obligation of the EU waste management legislation. The baseline and target years are set to cover the current reporting cycle. The unit of measurement is the number of illegal landfills.

Source of data: DG ENV (Internal Infringements Database)

Baseline (2019)	Interim milestone	Target (2024)
1500 Number of illegal landfills remaining in the EU (as covered in infringement cases)	N/A	Significant reduction of infringement cases

Result indicator 5.3: Compliance with EU nature rules

Explanation: The indicator shows the progress made by Member States in reaching compliance with key provisions of EU nature rules through EU investigation and infringement cases. The baseline and target years are set to cover the current reporting cycle. The unit of measurement is the number of Natura 2000 sites concerned by investigation / infringement.

Source of data: DG ENV (Internal Infringements Database)

Baseline (2019)	Interim milestone	Target (2024)
19% Natura 2000 sites assessed in EU investigation/infringement cases that have not yet been designated as Special Areas of Conservation or for which no conservation objectives or measures have yet been adopted by Member States under Art 4(4) of the Habitats Directive	N/A	Significant reduction in the % of sites covered by an investigation or infringement, showing progress in compliance with EU nature rules

Result indicator 5.4: Compliance with Air quality legislation

Explanation: The indicators show the progress made by Member States in reaching compliance in relation to the target values set in EU legislation for particulate matter and dioxide, which are very harmful for human health. The baseline and target years are set to cover the current reporting cycle. The unit of measurement is the number of urban areas covered by infringements.

Source of data: DG ENV (Internal Infringement Database)

Baseline (2019)	Interim milestone	Target (2024)
87 Air Quality zones covered by a PM ₁₀ infringement	N/A	Significant reduction in the number of zones
85 Air Quality zones covered by a NO ₂ infringement	N/A	Significant reduction in the number of zones

Result indicator 5.5: Compliance with the principles of environmental governance framework

Explanation: The environmental governance framework concerns all Directives involving requirements on environmental assessment/permits of plans and projects, public participation in environmental decision-making and access to justice rights on environmental matters. The indicator would cover both incorrect transposition cases as well as systemic breaches of bad application. The indicators show the progress made by Member States in reaching compliance in relation the principles set by the EU legislation related to environmental governance.

The unit of measurement is the number of open infringement cases

Source of data: DG ENV (Internal Infringement Database)

Baseline (2019)	Interim milestone	Target (2024)
a) Number of infringement cases relating to the breach of the EU environmental governance framework: 100 b) Number of infringement cases relating to the breach of access to justice rights in EU environmental rules: 25	N/A	Significant reduction in the number of cases (showing a) improved compliance by Member States with key provisions of EU environmental rules relating to governance and b) improved access to justice in national courts in environmental matters)

Result indicator 5.6: Number of cities applying for the European Green Capital Award

Explanation: Indicator reflecting the importance that cities attach to urban sustainability.

Source of data: DG ENV

Baseline (2019)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
9 cities	Increase	Increase

Specific objective 6: Global uptake of the environmental objectives of the European Green Deal is stimulated through participation in multilateral agreements, institutions and fora, EU accession negotiations, engagement with third countries and trade

Related to spending programme(s): **LIFE**

Result indicator 6.1: Progress towards a circular, resource efficient global economy

Explanation: Level of progress towards a greener, resource efficient global economy as, *inter alia*, reflected by clear policy commitments at the multilateral level, including the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)

Source of data: DG ENV analysis

Baseline (2020)	Interim milestone (2021)	Target (2024)
In the 2020 Circular Economy Action Plan, the Commission proposed the establishment of a 'Global Circular Economy Alliance to identify knowledge and governance gaps in advancing a global circular economy and take forward partnership initiatives, including with major economies'. It has also called for stepped up action in multilateral fora, including UNEA.	Decisions under UNEA5	A Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency promotes the sharing of best practice and support discussions on an international agreement on the management of natural resources. Furthermore, Decisions under UNEA and or in other high-level meetings support EU policy objectives linked to EGD

Result indicator 6.2: Environmental standards in enlargement and neighbourhood countries

Explanation: Much effort is still required to improve environmental standards in the enlargement and neighbourhood countries. The proximity of these countries to the EU and resources shared (air, water etc.) signifies the importance of co-operation to achieve the EU's environmental objectives. Progress will be monitored with respect to 1) the transposition of EU legislation in candidate countries and potential candidates and legal approximation in neighbourhood countries; 2) implementation and enforcement capacity; and 3) the planning and implementation of investments and measures in support of EU enlargement/approximation

Source of data: DG ENV analysis

Baseline (2020)	Interim milestone	Target (2024)
2020 Enlargement package outlining progress of candidate countries and potential candidates in assuming accession obligations. For Neighbourhood countries: reports of 2019/2020 environment subcommittee meetings under the Association/Partnership Agreement(s)	N/A	- Progress in the transposition, implementation and enforcement of EU environmental legislation in candidate countries and potential candidates. - Progress towards the adoption of EU standards and norms for environmental protection by countries covered by the EU Neighbourhood policy.

Result indicator 6.3: European Green Deal mainstreamed into bilateral and regional cooperation

Explanation: DG ENV proactively promotes the uptake of the environmental priorities of the EGD in its international activities at regional and bilateral level. This indicator will be used to monitor and report on the results of these efforts.

Source of data: DG ENV Analysis

Baseline (2020)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
N/A	European Green Deal mainstreamed into policy dialogues, outreach activities, bilateral and regional cooperation agreements.	European Green Deal mainstreamed into policy dialogues, outreach activities, bilateral and regional cooperation agreements.