

RECOMMENDATIONS ISSUED FOLLOWING THE EVALUATION OF THE EUROPEAN MARITIME SAFETY AGENCY APPROVED BY THE EMSA ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD, 12 JUNE 2008

I. CHANGES TO REGULATION 1406/2002

1. Amend Article 22 of Regulation 1406/2002 to provide for regular evaluations of the implementation of the EMSA regulation (every 5 years)

The evaluation exercise has shown its merits, and should be performed on a regular basis. The next and subsequent formal evaluations should examine also the extent to which Member State administrations have been able to make savings in activities formerly carried out at national level on account of EMSA's activities, as well as seeking stakeholders' views on the value of EMSA activities which are seen as additional or complementary.

Consequently, it is recommended to carry out such evaluations once every 5 years and to amend the aforementioned Article 22 accordingly at the next revision of the EMSA founding Regulation.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO THE AGENCY AND ITS WORKING PRACTISES

1. Continue to focus on activities which add value for its stakeholders (the Commission, Member States and citizens of the EU)

EMSA should continue to focus on activities which add value for the Commission, Member States and EU citizens, avoiding duplication or undue overlap with activities carried out at other levels, for example by Member State administrations. EMSA's activities should be additional or complementary to those of other tiers of administration, or should progressively substitute, where it has been agreed that specific tasks can be carried out more appropriately, more effectively or more efficiently at EU level (examples of additional activities include EMSA's supplementary oil pollution response capability in several regions and the development of the European LRIT system. Seafarer training and certification audits in third countries is an example of an activity where EMSA's role should progressively substitute for that of individual Member State administrations.). However, added value and a community approach should be demonstrated before a new task is assigned to EMSA. Corollary to this, the outcomes of the activities carried out by EMSA should also be evaluated and their benefits should be extolled.

Furthermore, EMSA should use its position and neutrality to report on trends observed in the course of its activities so as to provide an overview of the functioning and evolution of the maritime world to its stakeholders.

2. Develop a strategic plan covering a 5 year perspective

A Strategic Plan should be developed to provide an overview of the situation for EMSA over the next 5 years. This rolling plan should outline where the Agency wants to be in a 5 year time span and indicate priorities and the high-level objectives of the Agency, taking into account its mission, the multi annual staff policy plan, the Action Plan for Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response (Oil Action Plan) and key documents and influences that will affect it's work in the coming years. Concerning the Action Plan for Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response, strategic elements should also be included in its presentation in order to develop a common understanding of the implications of this strategy in terms of the roles and responsibilities of the involved stakeholders and to clarify and make explicit the longer term priorities guiding EMSA's work.

3. Continue in the efforts towards activity based costing and budgeting

EMSA needs to implement an activity based budgeting and accounting system as far as practicable, taking into consideration the existing constraints (budget structure, functionalities of ABAC system, etc). Such a system should allow EMSA to assign budget to activities and relate this to actual expenditure thereby enabling monitoring of progress. The first steps to implement such a system have been already taken in the Agency, by implementing a pilot system with posting criteria in the accounting system.

It is recommended that EMSA assigns high priority to developing activity based budgeting and accounting. This should be seen as a management tool facilitating day-to-day, goal-oriented management - and monitoring of achievements.

Such a system will allow the Agency to improve effectiveness and efficiency by determining the costs of individual activities and projects. At the same time, the system will allow the Agency to report accurately on the activities planned and budgeted for, activities undertaken, outputs produced and actual expenditure related to the given tasks.

4. Improve the communication plan

The current annual work plans and annual reports serve two different audiences. On the one hand, the Administrative Board will require detailed information to monitor progress using budget information, as set out in the third point of these recommendations. On the other hand, this level of detail will not be relevant for the general public. It is recommended that the Agency modifies its communication policy and practise to reflect this.

In fact, the Agency has started to implement this recommendation with the adoption of the 2007 Annual report, where overall information for the general public is published in the main section and is complemented with detailed information for the Administrative Board on budgets, activities, achievements and accounts in its annexes. In following this issue, this approach will be further fine-tuned.

5. Structure the annual work programmes to function as operational action plans for the given year

The work programmes should be more operational to function as a tool for monitoring of the Agency's performance. The Work Programme 2008 already represents a step in this direction.

The annual work programme should function as operational action plan for the given year, focusing on the planned activities and the associated budget for the year (activity based budgeting/costing). The work programme should be a management tool for the Executive Director and the Heads of Units giving a benchmark against which the activities and budgets can be implemented and progress can be monitored. The description of targets, milestones, expected outputs and expected outcomes should also be included in the annual work programme. In this way, the work programmes will also be a tool for overall progress monitoring for the Administrative Board.

6. Develop the annual report to reflect better actual achievements made against the targets

Annual reports, as provided for in EMSA's Founding Regulation, target two different audiences. On the one hand they serve to inform the political level, maritime stakeholders and the public at large of the main developments in EMSA. On the other hand they serve as a management tool for the Administrative Board to monitor progress and performance of the Agency at different levels.

It is recommended to strengthen this latter function by including the required detailed information for the Board on actual activities, achievements and expenditure at project level in a separate section of the report.

7. Develop the project management capacity

This evaluation has pointed to new, complex tasks requiring multidisciplinary work as an area with a scope for improving EMSA's effectiveness. There is a need to increase the flexibility of the organisation and to further encourage cross-unit and cross-disciplinary cooperation. It is recommended to focus on further development of the project management capacity as a tool in this regard.

The adoption of project management guidelines within EMSA is recommended and staff should be trained in planning and managing projects following such guidelines.

III. OTHER/GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Ensure formal, periodic reviews of EMSA's effectiveness.

In relation to regular evaluations as referred to under point I, EMSA's key stakeholders should have the opportunity to take stock of the Agency's development and effectiveness.

The final outcomes of EMSA activities in many cases depend upon decisions and actions to be taken by the Commission, the Member States and other EU institutions, with the benefit of advice and information provided by EMSA. There is a need to collect and bring together, in a form suitable for dissemination and publication, information about those decisions and actions and the outcomes which resulted. EMSA's effectiveness is ultimately determined

not by the number of reports which it produces, or the number of visits or inspections which it carries out, but by the progress made, with its support, in improving maritime safety and environmental protection. While it is important not to confuse the activities or actions of EMSA with those of the Commission, the Member States and other EU institutions, it should nevertheless be possible to obtain and publish periodic information about outcomes, with appropriate explanations for all of EMSA's activities.