



An explorative study on benchmarking MEAs: possibilities for cooperation

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The importance of cooperation

UNEP/INTOSAI (2010: A primer for auditing MEAs):

*Environmental audits, such as those conducted by Supreme Audit Institutions (SAI) **can and do play a crucial and vital role with regard to the implementation of MEAs** and can evaluate whether the tools that their governments use to manage and protect the environment and implement MEAs have produced the intended results.*

Contact Committee EU, after coordinated audit Waste Shipment (2013):

"Calls upon the CC members to participate in the future in similar international audits with the objective to compare and benchmark the results of the individual member states."

EUROSAI WGEA Strategic plan 2015-2017 (2014):

Goal 1: Encourage Concurrent or Coordinated Audits

Goal 2: Environmental topics in a citizen perspective

UN-INTOSAI (2015):

SAI's have an important role regarding the Global Development Goals.



What did we do?

Main question: Which MEAs are for the Netherlands Court of Audit the best option to audit in an international benchmark?

An explorative audit: short, explorative, not published, a tool for scoping & selecting audits

Method: interviews with universities, ministries, EU DG Environment, IMPEL, UNEP, environmental organizations, governmental environmental agencies, Dutch employers' organization.



Results - Environmental problems with high risks for The Netherlands

1. Climate change



2. Biodiversity



3. Marine environment



4. Air quality





Results – General issues related to MEAs

1. Negotiations often lead to an agreement about country-specific targets and criteria that are **insufficient** for reaching the desired overall goal of a MEA.
2. **Monitoring** systems differ between countries and local authorities. Budget cuts sometimes lead to mathematical monitoring instead of real life monitoring. This leads to differences in results.
3. MEAs sometimes establish one or more **funds** to finance endeavors that help reaching the desired goal. What is the effectiveness of these funds?
4. There is a wide range of MEAs; all of them dealing with particular environmental problems. There is not one institution that deals with all global environmental challenges, this has led to a **spaghetti** of MEAs, which is not considered to be very efficient.
5. All MEAs have their own regular **meetings**. Climate change negotiations for instance, demand much time and effort of governmental officials and other people working in this policy field. What are the costs and results of these meetings?



Suitable for cooperation?

	Suitable for NCA-audit?	Suitable for coordinated audit?
	Climate change Yes: use of access to information is needed	No: insufficient agreements not suitable to compare
	Biodiversity No: unclear goals MEA more appropriate for governmental environmental agencies	No: insufficient agreements not suitable to compare
	Marine environment Yes: the NCA can deliver a helicopter-view over ministries	Yes & No: MEAs can be compared, but criteria are often not mandatory or unclear
	Air quality Yes: use access to (monitoring) information	Yes: clear criteria in MEAs + citizen perspective



Air quality - MEAs

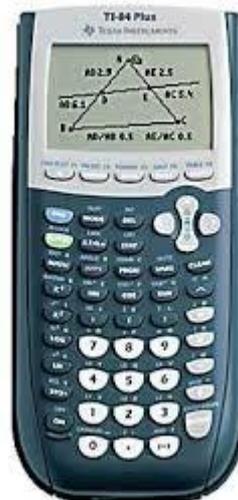
- The 1979 Geneva Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP)
- Protocols:
 - Acidification, Eutrophication, ground-level ozone - Gothenburg Protocol (1999, revised in 2012)
 - Persistent Organic Pollutants, Heavy metals, Sulphur emissions, Nitrogen Oxides
 - EMEP – monitoring and evaluation
- EU directive on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (2008)
- Research in the Netherlands, before revision of Gothenburg: the **benefits of tighter air quality standards are much higher than the costs**. People live longer and healthier, because of extra emission reductions. Besides, it reduces the negative effects on biodiversity.



Netherlands: Monitoring air quality

Different ways to measure air quality. Examples:

- Certificated measurement stations
- Mathematical models
- Citizens measuring in their own cities



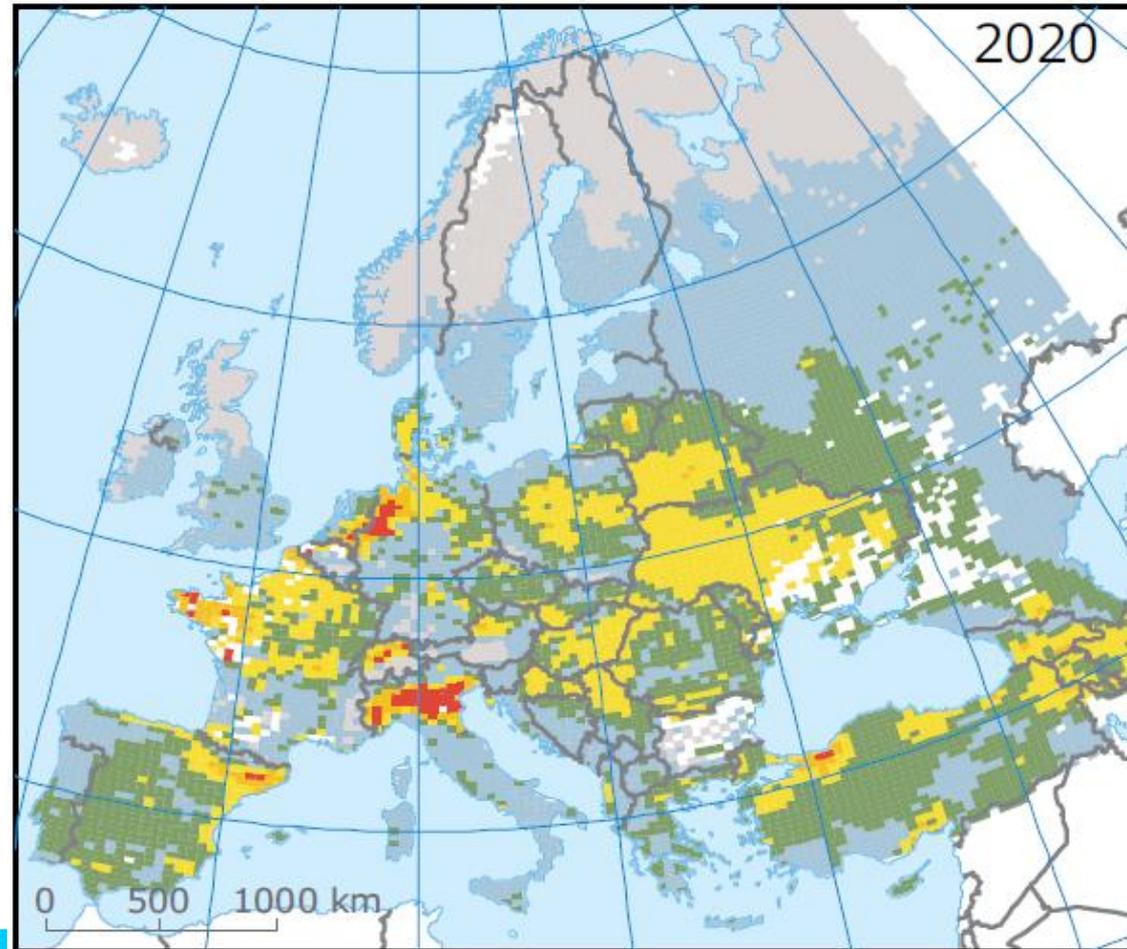


Air quality – European Environmental Agency

State and Outlook 2015:

1. Despite cuts in air emissions, ecosystems still suffer from eutrophication, acidification and ozone.

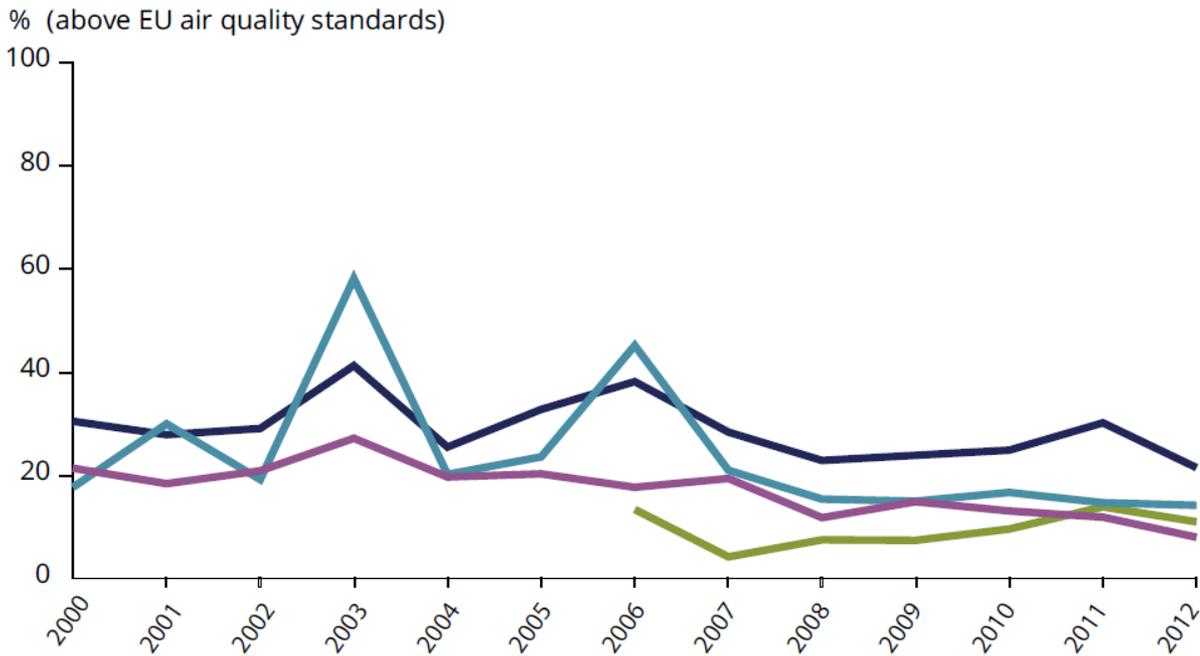
Areas where critical loads for eutrophication for freshwater and terrestrial habitats are exceeded by nitrogen depositions caused by emissions



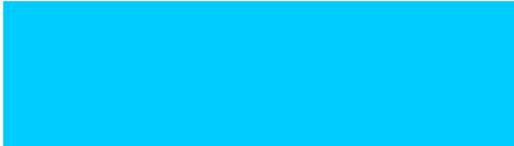
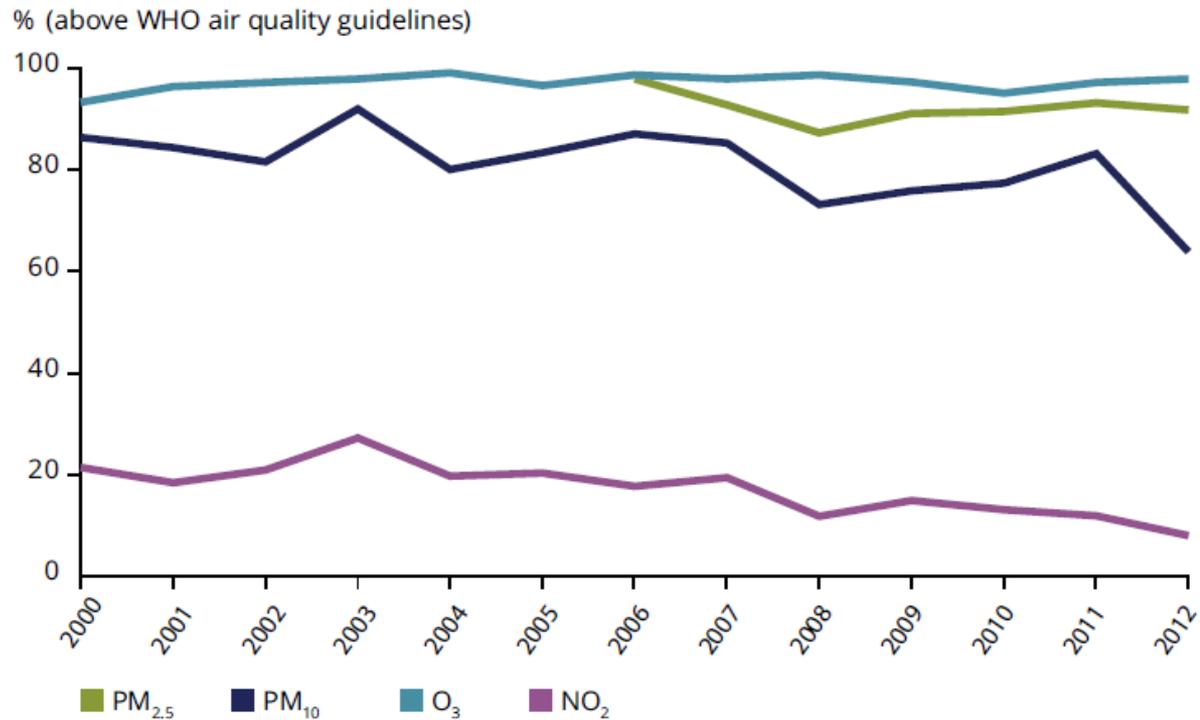
State and Outlook 2015:

2. Ambient air quality has improved, but many citizens are still exposed to dangerous pollutants.

Percentage of the EU urban population potentially exposed to air pollution exceeding selected EU air quality standards

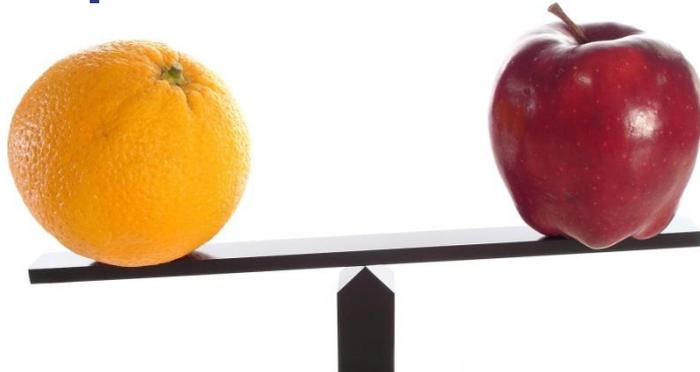


Percentage of the EU urban population potentially exposed to air pollution exceeding selected WHO air quality guidelines





Cooperation – benchmark?

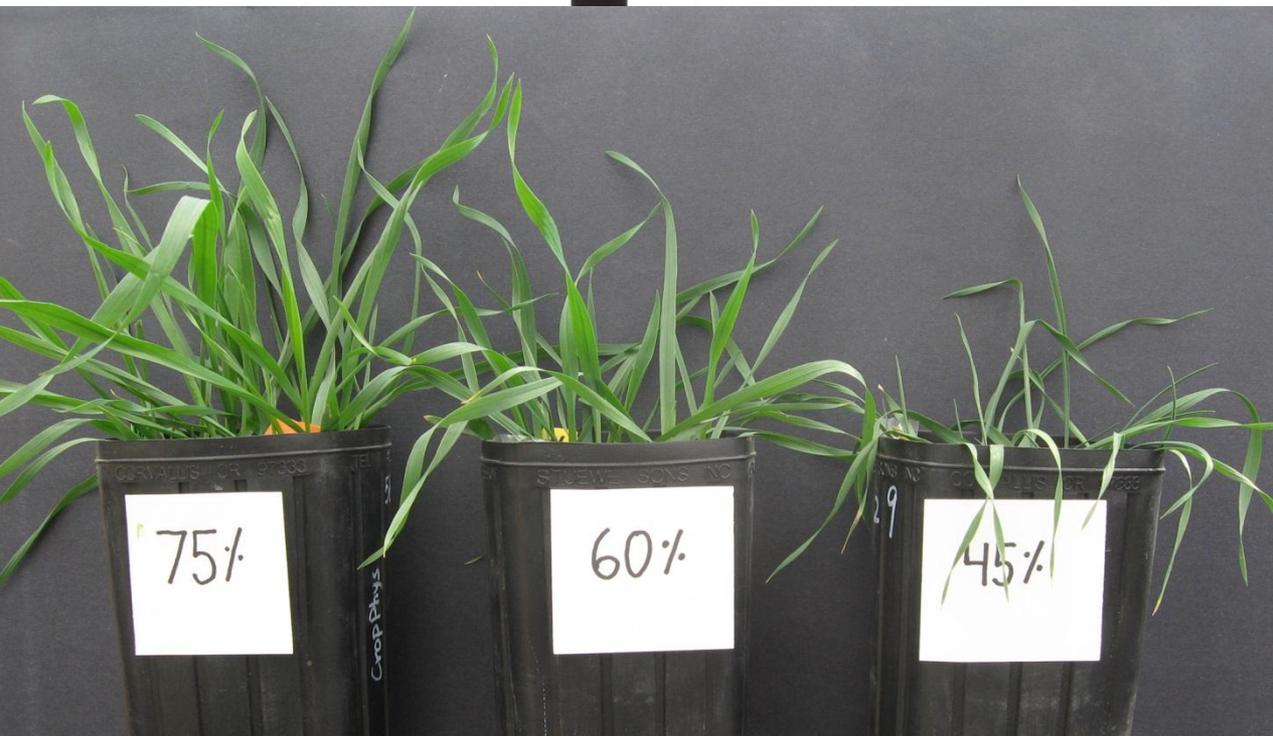


Goal is not:

- Apples and oranges comparison
- Decide on who the winner is

Goal is:

- Compare input, output and effects
- Learn from each other





We ask for your help!

1. Does your SAI have any experience in auditing the topic of air quality?
2. Does your SAI have any plans to audit the topic of air quality in the (near) future?
3. Would you like to brainstorm with us about setting up a cooperative audit on the topic of air quality?

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