

SAPEA

Science Advice for Policy by European Academies



Sustainability plan



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Front page image: Delegates at the 2019 SAPEA science advice symposium in Helsinki, Finland (Tomi Setälä/SAPEA)

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Sustainability plan to support the future strategic development of SAPEA

Making optimal use of the outstanding expertise of Europe's academies in the European Commission's Scientific Advice Mechanism

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FOREWORD

Welcome to SAPEA's Sustainability Plan, our future strategy to make optimal use of the outstanding expertise of Europe's academies within the European Commission's Scientific Advice Mechanism.

SAPEA (Science Advice for Policy by European Academies) is an integral part of the European Commission's Scientific Advice Mechanism and works in close cooperation with the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors. Together, we provide the European Commission with high-quality scientific advice to support policymaking. We do so against a background of global challenges that are increasingly complex and multifaceted, such as climate change, the impact of digitalisation on society, transboundary pollution and social inequalities. Europe has ambitious plans to tackle issues like these, and SAPEA's role is to provide an evidence base of the highest quality on which to build policy solutions and lead to more effective legislation.

Europe's academies have a long history of scientific excellence and cooperation. Collectively, SAPEA represents over 100 academies, young academies and learned societies across more than 40 countries. Together, we offer outstanding expertise across all disciplines, including engineering, humanities, medicine, natural and social sciences. SAPEA works to strengthen Europe's academies, providing a means for close collaboration in a unique and interdisciplinary way. We stimulate the debate around the nature of scientific evidence, best practice in science advice, and the use of evidence in policymaking at both European and national levels, whilst also encouraging the further development of science advisory systems.

This Sustainability Plan sets out our strategy on how the SAPEA consortium can build on the achievements of the current project (2016–2021), as we continue to develop and apply our competencies in supporting outstanding science advice in Europe within the Scientific Advice Mechanism.

My sincere thanks go to everyone who has contributed to SAPEA and this final report.

Professor Günter Stock
Chair of the sustainability working group

OUR MISSION

SAPEA brings together outstanding expertise in engineering, humanities, medicine, natural and social sciences from over 100 academies, young academies and learned societies across more than 40 countries in Europe.

Our mission is threefold:

- to provide high-quality, timely and independent scientific evidence, together with evidence-based policy options
- to strengthen the landscape of academies in Europe, providing opportunities for Academy Fellows and other leading experts to participate in SAPEA's activities
- to communicate and disseminate effectively the outputs of the Scientific Advice Mechanism and to undertake outreach activities that achieve tangible impact

OUR VISION

Our vision is to ensure that SAPEA continues to develop and apply its outstanding competencies to support the European Commission's Scientific Advice Mechanism as it matures over the coming years.

OUR VALUES



Scientific excellence



Independence of thought and expression, with full transparency in our work and standards of the highest quality



Cooperation between Europe's academies, collegiality between Academy Fellows and with the wider scientific community



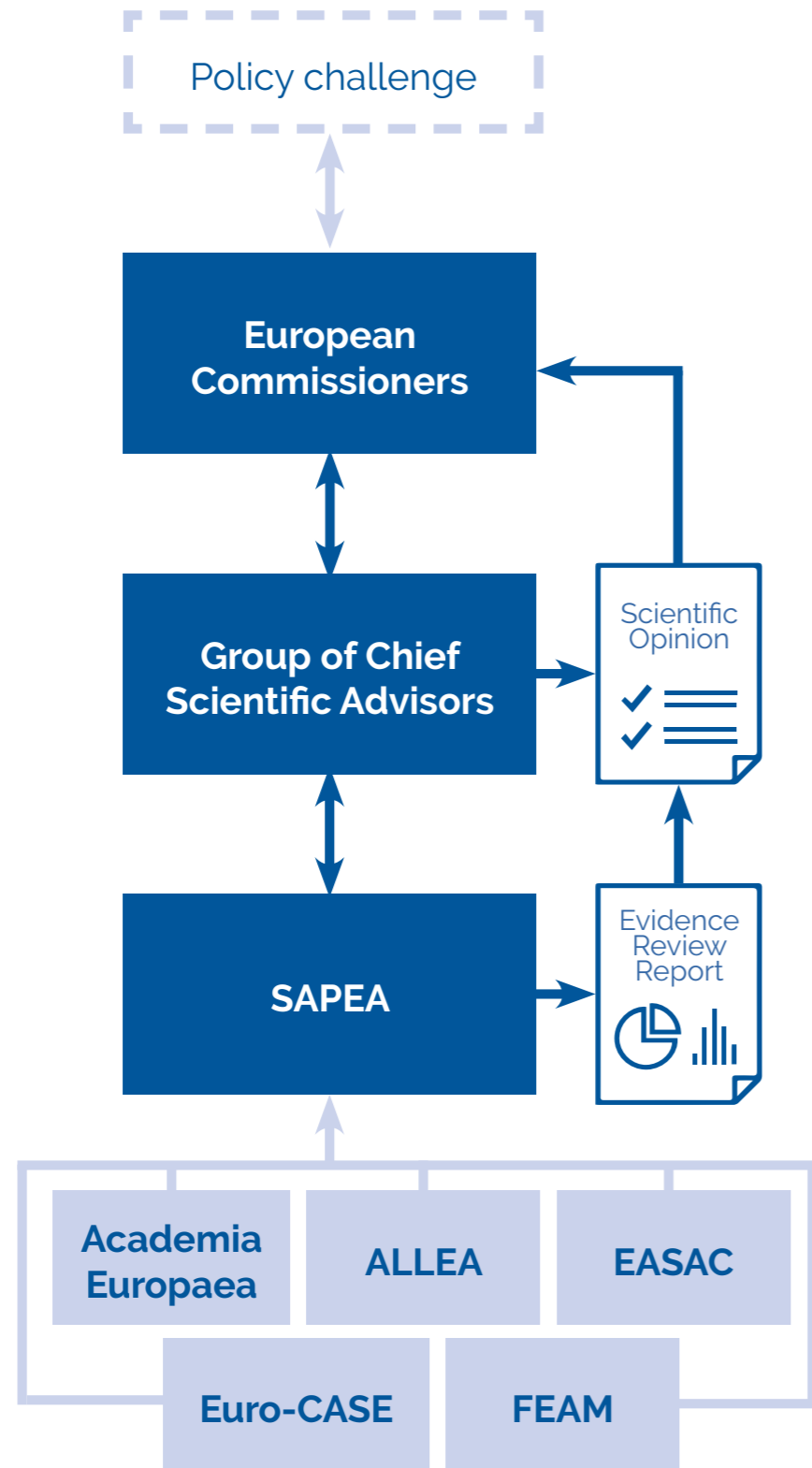
Transparency, openness of communication and information

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES



OUR CORE SCIENTIFIC PRODUCT

Our core scientific product is the SAPEA Evidence Review Report, which provides a comprehensive review of the published evidence on a policy-related scientific question taken up by the Scientific Advice Mechanism. The SAPEA Evidence Review Report informs the Advisors' Scientific Opinion, which is addressed to the European Commission.



Key activities and achievements 2016–Q1 2020

7 Evidence Review Reports delivered to meet the needs of policymaking



100+ outreach activities in cooperation with academies



3 symposia major international on science advice organised with hosted by academies



Full engagement of **academies** in nominating **experts** • organising **meetings** • hosting **events**

121 leading experts from **28** countries




175 participated in expert workshops or further contributors

involved in working groups

others served as peer reviewers

Quality guidelines & procedures developed and updated



Evidence Review Reports 2016–Q1 2020 and associated impact and outreach data

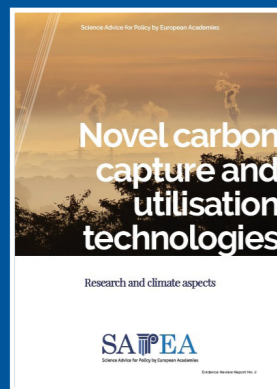


Food from the oceans

November 2017

How can more food and biomass be obtained from the oceans in a way that does not deprive future generations of their benefits?

- 23 science events
- 20 science/policy events
- 13 public events
- 71% of scientific citations in top-ranked journals*
- 97 social media engagements since 2019*
- ~2000 visitors to SAPEA webpage*



Novel carbon capture and utilisation techniques

May 2018

Can carbon capture and utilisation technologies contribute significantly to mitigating the effects of climate change?

- 1 science event
- 1 science/policy event
- 4 public events
- 90% of scientific citations in top-ranked journals*



Authorisation for plant protection products in Europe

June 2018

How can the EU's authorisation processes for plant protection products be made more effective, efficient and transparent?

- 1 science event
- 7 science/policy events
- 50% of scientific citations in top-ranked journals*



A scientific perspective on microplastics in nature and society

January 2019

What are the health and environmental impacts of microplastic and nanoplastic pollution?

- 2 science events
- 11 science/policy events
- 2 public events
- 62% of scientific citations in top-ranked journals*
- 2944 social media engagements since 2019*
- 15 010 visitors to SAPEA webpage*

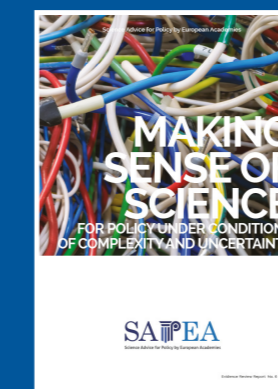


Transforming the future of ageing

June 2019

What policies could support EU member states in achieving inclusive, fair and sustainable systems of health and social care?

- 5 public events
- 2 science/policy events
- 669 social media engagements since 2019*
- 3580 visitors to SAPEA webpage*



Making sense of science for policy under conditions of complexity and uncertainty

July 2019

How can we provide good science advice to the European Commission under conditions of complexity and uncertainty?

- 11 science events
- 10 science/policy events
- 1213 social media engagements since 2019*
- 5509 visitors to SAPEA webpage*



A sustainable food system for the European Union

April 2020

Our current food system is unsustainable. How can we ensure future food security without treating people unfairly or leaving them behind?

Data on events and outreach is not yet available

Scientific citations: a 'top-ranked journal' means a journal in the top quartile of its subject category according to the 2018 Web of Science Journal Impact Factor. Analysis is not yet available for the most recent topics

Social media engagements: an 'engagement' means a like, share, retweet, clickthrough, reply or comment. This measures interactions with the central SAPEA social media accounts only (not with our networks or others who share our content). Earlier topics are underrepresented because data was only recorded systematically from January 2019. Not all data is available for all topics

Visitors to SAPEA webpage: this counts unique visitors to the topic page, including downloads of the report or associated documents. Simple hit counts (which include the same individual visiting more than once) are typically 35–60% higher.

CONTEXT

Today's complex global challenges underline the need for high-quality, independent and transdisciplinary scientific evidence to inform policymaking.

Within this context, the Scientific Advice Mechanism was established by the European Commission in 2015. At its heart is the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors. The Advisors work closely with the SAPEA consortium, which has been operational since November 2016. Over the past three and a half years, SAPEA has provided evidence and evidence-based policy options to inform the Scientific Opinions of the Advisors, principally through our comprehensive Evidence Review Reports. SAPEA has created a robust infrastructure and process for this work, backed by rigorous quality-assurance procedures.

Europe's academies represent a source of world-class knowledge and scientific evidence, covering all disciplines, providing unique benefits to evidence-based policymaking and the work of the Scientific Advice Mechanism. As bodies independent of political or institutional interests, academies play a major role in scientific advice systems throughout Europe. They therefore have a long tradition and extensive knowledge of how to provide science-based policy advice. Independence, academic expertise, convening ability and scientific excellence make academies the most critical source of evidence for policymakers and the wider public, providing a perspective that is independent, balanced and transparent. As the SAPEA report on *Making Sense of Science for Policy* acknowledges, science advice is one of a range of inputs to most policy cases, but it occupies a unique position (SAPEA, 2019).



Cooperation between the Advisors and SAPEA continues to flourish, while links with scientific advisors and other scientific advice structures within Europe and beyond grow stronger.

Rolf-Dieter Heuer, Chair of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors (European Commission 2020)

As a key player in the science advice landscape, SAPEA's unique advantage is the ability to leverage close ties with Academy Networks and their member academies, both as a source of world-class expertise and also as a channel to reach out to policymakers, the general public and other stakeholders. As part of SAPEA's communications and outreach activities, we co-organise a high-profile programme of academy-hosted events related to policy-focused issues, as well as the practice of providing science for policy. By these means, SAPEA ensures that the outputs of the Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAPEA Evidence Review Reports and the Scientific Opinions of the Advisors) achieve tangible impact.

The overall outcome is that SAPEA plays a crucial role in enhancing the impact and visibility of academies and science advice across Europe. Moreover, the outputs from the Scientific Advice Mechanism have already had a demonstrable impact on policy development and legislation in Europe.

Topic	Impact on policy development and legislation through the Scientific Opinion of the Advisors
Food from the oceans	The Scientific Opinion informed the Commission's proposals for the post-2020 European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (2018/390), the reflection paper <i>Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030</i> , and the progress report on <i>International Ocean Governance</i> . The Opinion's recommendations were addressed in the EU's revised bio-economy strategy.
Novel carbon capture and utilisation technologies	The recommendations in the Opinion enabled the funding of CCU projects through the Innovation Fund (2019/1492) for demonstrating innovative low-carbon technologies.
Authorisation of plant protection products	The Opinion's recommendations are explicitly referenced in the Regulation on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain (COM(2018)179, 2018/0088(COD)), and taken up in the European Parliament's Special Committee on Pesticides report on EU authorisation procedures for pesticides (2018/2153(INI)). The Regulation on the transparency and sustainability of EU risk assessment was adopted by the Council on 13 June 2019. A day after the publication of the Scientific Opinion, the scientific journal <i>Nature</i> discussed its contents in an editorial.
A scientific perspective on microplastics in nature and society	The Opinion has informed a number of debates both within the scientific community and among policymakers, including roundtable meetings of G7 Chief Scientific Advisors on Scientific Advice cooperation for microplastic pollution in Washington DC in February 2019 and in Paris on 15 October 2019, and has strengthened international cooperation between Chief Scientific Advisors. The work also informed the European Chemical Agency's proposal to restrict intentionally added microplastics (January 2019).

Our strategic priorities

1 To develop further the ability to provide high-quality, timely and independent scientific evidence

2 To continue to strengthen the diverse landscape of academies in Europe, as providers of science advice

3 To communicate and disseminate the outputs of the Scientific Advice Mechanism and undertake effective outreach activities

4 To build capacity that makes best use of SAPEA's competencies and ensure involvement by key groups

OBJECTIVES

Our objectives are to:

- continue to focus on the Evidence Review Report as the main output of SAPEA, but also make use of other methods and formats when appropriate
- continue to strengthen systematic literature review, as part of the provision of evidence
- further improve effective horizon-scanning activities, topic identification and scoping work
- continue to connect ever more closely and strategically with leading scientific experts who are not Fellows of academies

ACTIONS

The actions we will take are to:

- gather best practice of other approaches to evidence-gathering in science for policy, and discuss proven and innovative methods and formats with the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors and the SAM Unit
- continue to strengthen the capacity and capability to undertake effective and timely systematic literature reviews
- establish a workable model and process for undertaking horizon-scanning activities, including innovative methods of approach. These could include online consultation via our website and social media, as well as data-driven methods. We are also ready to strengthen our scoping activities for new topics as part of the Scientific Advice Mechanism
- further mobilise the involvement of non-academy experts in our work, where it adds real value to what we do

INDICATORS

We will measure our effectiveness by developing the use of indicators that provide insight into:

- the quantity, quality and impact of our Evidence Review Reports, systematic literature reviews and other outputs, in consultation with the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors
- the quantity, quality and impact of our horizon-scanning activities, topic identification and scoping work
- the openness of SAPEA to involving a wider range of experts, specifically non-Academy Fellows, and the quantity, quality and impact of this engagement

Providing high-quality advice

Samples of success



The *Transforming the Future of Ageing* report is handed over to Pearl Dykstra (Group of Chief Scientific Advisors) at the Royal National Academy of Medicine in Spain



Working group for the *Making Sense of Science for Policy* topic



Panel at the Royal Society (UK): Johannes Klumpers (SAM unit), Ortwin Renn (SAPEA working group) and Nicole Grobert (Group of Chief Scientific Advisors)

A set of unique competences

All partners in the SAPEA consortium offer outstanding and complementary interdisciplinary expertise, from the social sciences and humanities to natural sciences, medical sciences to technical and engineering sciences. SAPEA also offers outstanding skills-based competence. For example, ALLEA leads on SAPEA's communications and Academia Europaea oversees rigorous systematic literature reviews on behalf of SAPEA.

Topic identification and scoping

The SAPEA partners have developed a process of identifying topics of their own for the Science Advice Mechanism. For

example, the FEAM Council discusses potential topics during its biannual meetings and in 2019, an online survey was sent to the FEAM member academies. This led to the topic *Transforming the Future of Ageing*, which was published as an Evidence Review Report. Another example is that of *Data Governance*, where ALLEA was able to collaborate and build on an ongoing stream of work with the Royal Society and the British Academy. To scope a potential project, ALLEA organised a workshop attended by key stakeholders in the field, such as scientists, policymakers, and the private sector. A similar approach was used by Euro-CASE to scope the topic *A Systemic Approach to the Energy Transition in Europe*.

Members of the EASAC Bureau and several experts have participated in scoping meetings and workshops organised at the European Commission,

providing vital input to the final scoping paper on *Climate Change and Health*, for example.

Horizon-scanning

The SAPEA partners are able to work through academy committees and standing working groups for horizon-scanning activities. The Euro-CASE Platforms are a good example of where horizon-scanning work is providing input for SAPEA. These Platforms gather several Fellows of Euro-CASE member academies that work on a dedicated issue, such as Artificial Intelligence, Innovation and Energy.

Innovative methods

In undertaking a comprehensive systematic review for the topic *Sustainable*

Food Systems, Academia Europaea's partner Cardiff University used cutting-edge text-mining methods to identify new search terms and concepts. As well as undertaking systematic reviews for SAPEA, Cardiff University also conducts automated plagiarism checks as part of SAPEA's quality assurance processes.

SAPEA's link with non-academy experts

Non-academy experts are active in SAPEA working groups, expert workshops, events and other aspects of SAPEA's work. Nearly 50% of the membership of SAPEA working groups are not Fellows of academies, although they were nominated and selected through the academies.

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OBJECTIVES

Our objectives are to:

- **continue to build and strengthen close relationships with academies, mainly across Europe, and offer a platform for exchange of best practice, with the purpose of maximising the capacity and capabilities of academies to contribute to the Scientific Advice Mechanism**
- **strengthen cooperation with international Academy Networks and individual academies across the world, where this adds value**

ACTIONS

The actions we will take are to:

- **organise regular capacity-building workshops and conferences with the academies, in order to share and nurture best practices in science advice for policymaking**
- **continue to initiate and co-organise more topic-related events with academies in Europe and beyond, stimulating public debate about the outputs of the Scientific Advice Mechanism and engaging with policymakers and other stakeholders at national and regional levels**
- **organise high-profile annual SAPEA symposia on the theme of science for policy, as a means of disseminating knowledge and raising awareness of SAPEA and the work of the Scientific Advice Mechanism**
- **continue to organise working group meetings, SAPEA Board meetings and workshops at academies across Europe**

INDICATORS

We will measure our effectiveness by developing the use of indicators that provide insight into:

- **the increasing levels of engagement with academies, and further development of the landscape for academies in Europe and beyond, resulting in tangible outcomes and impact**



Strengthening the academy landscape

Samples of success

Workshops and capacity-building

SAPEA has organised several successful workshops with academies, with the purpose of building capacity and capability to support its work in the Scientific Advice Mechanism. These include meetings at the Royal Academy of Engineering in Madrid (September 2017) and the Romanian Academy of Engineering in Bucharest (October 2017).

Academy-hosted symposia

SAPEA has organised successful academy-hosted symposia in Tallinn (2017), Sofia (2018) and Helsinki (2019). SAPEA Board meetings have also been hosted by academies, for example, the Swiss Academy (Bern, 2018), the French Academy of Medicine (Paris 2018) and the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Scientists (Amsterdam, 2019).

Topic-related events

In the last three years, SAPEA has co-organised more than 20 topic-related events with academies, focusing on the outputs of the Scientific Advice Mechanism.

Partner events

The SAPEA partners also cover SAPEA's work at their own general meetings. For example, ALLEA has included dedicated sessions on SAPEA at three of its General Assemblies so far (2017 Budapest, 2018 Sofia, 2019 Bern), and Euro-CASE at two (September 2018, October 2019). Academia Europaea has included sessions related to SAPEA at all of its annual conferences, held in Barcelona.

Pilvi Torsti, Finnish Secretary of State for Labour, speaks at the 2019 SAPEA symposium in Helsinki, co-hosted by the Finnish Academy of Sciences and Letters, the Academy of Finland and the Prime Minister of Finland and the Ministry of Education and Culture. (Tomi Setälä / SAPEA)

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4 To build capacity that makes best use of SAPEA's competencies and ensure involvement by key groups

OBJECTIVES

Our objectives are to:

- **strengthen our activities in communications, dissemination and outreach, whilst developing closer links to the academies and other stakeholders**
- **continue to be open, transparent and interactive in all our communications and outreach**
- **optimise our gathering of evidence and insight into the impact of what we do**

ACTIONS

The actions we will take are to:

- optimise our communications strategy and topic-related communication plans, by traditional means but also more innovative and interactive methods like social media, multimedia resources, and apps that stimulate debate around the SAPEA Evidence Review Reports, Scientific Opinions of the Advisors, and other outputs of the Scientific Advice Mechanism
- innovate and experiment in our approach to outreach events
- develop expertise- and capacity-sharing with academies across Europe in the area of communications and outreach
- professionalise strategic media relations, improving outreach to selected stakeholders, policymakers and public servants, especially at the national level
- enhance our outreach to the general public, to focus not only on topics but also on the work of the Scientific Advice Mechanism as a whole, and the role of evidence in policymaking
- continue to publish all our outputs under open access licensing, so they are free and open to all
- develop a strategy by which to improve the collection of data that measures the impact of communications and outreach activities

INDICATORS

We will measure our effectiveness by developing the use of indicators that provide insight into:

- the quantity, quality and impact of all our communications and outreach activities

Communications and outreach

Samples of success

Outreach events

Over the last 2.5 years, over 100 topic-related outreach events have taken place in 18 countries in Europe and 8 beyond Europe. Many have been co-organised with the SAM Unit, with participation by the Group of Chief of Scientific Advisors as speakers. These have included some largescale international conferences, such as EFSA (2018), ESOF (2018) and the World Science Forum (2019).

Multimedia resources

SAPEA produced a video to promote the key messages of the SAPEA report on Carbon Capture and Utilisation, launched at the ESOF (EuroScience Open Forum) Conference in Toulouse in 2018.

SAPEA produced a video for the topic Making Sense of Science for Policy, in collaboration with the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors.

Innovative outreach

SAPEA has developed many creative products to communicate key messages from its reports, including infographics and a colouring sheet for Food from the Oceans, used at events around the world; 'five-minute clinics' for entrepreneurs to discuss the implications of our evidence reviews at the European Maritime Days 2019; a customised 'microplastics escape room game' for World Oceans Day 2019; and a specially developed mobile app for use at our outreach events.

Measuring impact

SAPEA has collected data systematically about our communications and outreach activities. For example, a report on the impact of Food from the Oceans outreach activities, including the academic community, policymakers and the general public was produced.



Top: SAPEA infographics and public materials on various topics; SAPEA presence at the 2019 European Maritime Days in Lisbon, Portugal. Bottom: Tarmo Soomere (Estonia) and Brian Cox (UK) contributing to a public SAPEA event; example of SAPEA social media activity

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OBJECTIVES

Our objectives are to:

- **establish the most effective organisational and operating structure for a continuation of SAPEA**
- **take a proactive approach to achieving more significant representation of key groups within SAPEA, especially by Fellows of Young Academies and early-career researchers**

ACTIONS

The actions we will take are to:

- further develop governance, management and legal structures in SAPEA
- design a flexible staffing structure, so that SAPEA has the possibility to engage additional staff at peak times of work (these could include temporary science policy officers, scientific writers, project assistants and information scientists), so that we are able to meet the schedules of the European Commission
- set ourselves realistic yet challenging targets at a pan-European level for representation of key groups within SAPEA. These will include:
 - ▶ continuing to meet targets on gender
 - ▶ creating a framework under which the young academies can join the next SAPEA project as a partner in the consortium
 - ▶ increasing the involvement of young scientists and other early-career researchers in SAPEA working groups and other activities
 - ▶ developing further our strategy on how to optimise the geographical coverage of SAPEA activities, ensuring the broad input of perspectives from across Europe

INDICATORS

We will measure our effectiveness by developing the use of indicators that provide insight into:

- the cost-effectiveness of our operations
- achieving agreed targets on representation

Involvement by key groups

Samples of success

Working with young academies

Young academies across Europe have been working together to coordinate nominations of experts to SAPEA working groups. 50% of SAPEA working groups have included members nominated by young academies.

Outreach to early-career researchers

SAPEA has presented at a number of events aimed at early-career researchers. These include the European Young Researchers' Network (Poland, 2019), the Annual Meeting of the Marie Curie Alumni Association (Brussels, 2019) and an event organised by Sense about Science (2020). The focus is on raising awareness of how early-career researchers can be involved in the science advice process, and the importance of effective communication between scientists and policymakers.

Gender targets

The average representation of women on SAPEA working groups has been 38%, which is significantly higher than the average percentage of female Academy Fellows in Europe.

Geographical coverage

To date, SAPEA working group members have come from 25 different European countries and 3 from beyond Europe (Australia, Brazil and New Zealand).

Daniela Schmidt, Fellow of the Young Academy of Europe and of the SAPEA working group on Food from the Oceans



GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONAL RESOURCES

SAPEA has five partners (Academia Europaea, ALLEA, EASAC, Euro-CASE and FEAM) and a project coordinator (acatech). The SAPEA Board comprises the Presidents of the five partners in SAPEA.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Each SAPEA partner has a full-time Science Policy Officer, supported by a central Communications Team in Brussels and a project coordination team in Berlin. The executive directors of each SAPEA partner take a proactive role in the smooth running of the SAPEA project. Temporary staff are recruited on a flexible arrangement to tackle peak periods of demand.

OFFICE LOCATIONS

SAPEA has a central office in Brussels, a project coordination office in Berlin and other operations in Cardiff, Halle, London and Paris.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

SAPEA is funded by a Horizon 2020 operating grant (737432), running from November 2016 to December 2021.



SAPEA Board members, September 2019. Left to right: Thierry Courvoiser (EASAC), Antonio Loprieno (ALLEA), Sierd Cloetingh (Academia Europaea), Reinhard Hüttl (Euro-CASE), George Griffin (FEAM)



SAPEA staff team, September 2019



IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of this Sustainability Plan will be monitored and evaluated over the forthcoming period, as we complete the current SAPEA project and look to embark on its successor.

As a Horizon 2020 project, SAPEA undertakes continuous reporting on its activities and progress, including a comprehensive set of performance indicators. SAPEA also reports on its work at scheduled meetings with the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors. The SAPEA website is our main channel for communicating to wider stakeholder groups.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Working group members

- ▶ Günter Stock (Chair)
- ▶ Ole Petersen (AE)
- ▶ Antonio Loprieno (ALLEA)
- ▶ Thierry Courvoiser (EASAC)
- ▶ Yves Caristan (Euro-CASE)
- ▶ George Griffin (FEAM)

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- ▶ Matthias Johannsen (ALLEA)
- ▶ Olivier Pironneau (EASAC)

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“

It was the best working group I have ever worked with. Everyone did their job in a timely, efficient and effective manner. Very well organised by SAPEA.

Working group member

“

It's been great to work with you on this important project. Looking forward to continuing to promote this work and also to being a part of future SAPEA projects.

Royal Irish Academy (2018)

“

This is how science for policy can work.

DG MARE (2018)

“

This substantive Opinion and comprehensive Evidence Review shows that the European Commission's Scientific Advice Mechanism is going from strength to strength.

*Carlos Moedas, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation 2015-2019
(2017)*

“

SAPEA recognises the importance of not only announcing science but really engaging with the public.

Jean-Eric Paquet, Director-General for Research and Innovation (2019)

“

I also thank each and every expert who has provided valuable input and shared his or her time selflessly with the Advisors or when developing the excellent SAPEA Evidence Review Reports informing the Advisors' Opinions.

*Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth
(2020)*



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