



EUROPEAN POLAR BOARD

EUROPEAN POLAR BOARD INTERNAL REVIEW REPORT

Autumn 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Executive Summary	1
2	Introduction	3
2.1	Why an internal review?	3
2.2	Methodology	3
2.2.1	Survey	3
2.2.2	Interviews:	4
2.2.3	Document review:	4
2.3	Review process and development of the new EPB Strategy	4
3	Strategic Management	5
3.1	What does the EPB Organisational Architecture look like?	5
3.2	What is the EPB's long term vision and mission?	6
3.3	Longevity and focus on both poles	7
3.4	Solving cross-cutting issues	7
3.5	Connecting the poles	7
4	Operational Management	9
4.1	Financial Framework	9
4.2	Agility of the organisation	9
4.3	Presence of the EPB in the Polar research community	10
4.4	Official status of the EPB and financial transparency	10
4.5	Financial Accountability	10
5	Relationship Management	12
5.1	EPB activities and planning for EPB Members	12
5.2	The EPB and external organisations the EPB works closely together with	12
5.3	EPB response to the COVID-19 pandemic	13
5.4	Multidisciplinary polar knowledge	13
6	Performance Management	14
6.1	General results since launch of the EPB Strategy 2017-2022	14
6.2	Ensuring success of EPB activities within action groups	15

6.3	Ensuring success of EPB activities internally	16
6.4	Ensuring success of EPB activities within projects	16
6.5	Response to potential underperforming activities	16
7	Management of Results	17
7.1	Soft power	17
7.2	Maintaining and strengthening the EPB network	17
8	Annex 1: Overview of action points	19
9	Annex 2: Overview of the KPIs	20



EUROPEAN POLAR BOARD: INTERNAL REVIEW REPORT

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The EPB Internal Review has been completed to better understand at which internal management aspects the EPB excels, and on which internal management aspects there is room for improvement. The Internal Review focuses on the EPB’s work during the period 2016 to 2021.

The Internal Review followed the MOPAN 3.0 methodology, modified according to the EPB’s needs. This report provide EPB Members with extensive details of the Internal Review and its findings and recommendations. Results from the Internal Review will feed into a subsequent External Review process, and the process for the development of the next EPB Strategy (2023-2027).

Sources of evidence:

Online Survey:
17 responses, from a total of 28 members

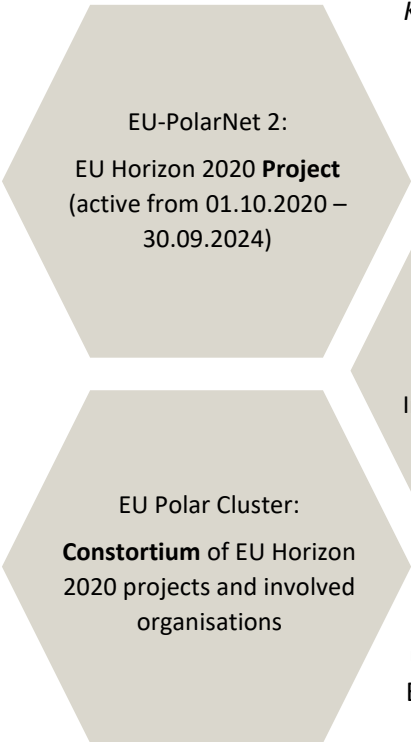
Interviews:
with representatives of 10 organisations

Document Review:
Including 60+ documents

The Internal Review was carried out by the EPB Internal Review Committee (IRCOM), consisting of:

- A Quesada (Chair)
- K Latola
- V Vitale
- JB Ørbæk
- R Vaikmäe
- T Giberyen

It was supported by P Elshout (EPB Project Officer). The Executive Secretary acted as an observer to IRCOM to provide feedback from the Secretariat.



Key findings:

Members assessed the EPB’s work during the review period favourably, and provided concrete feedback to develop the EPB further. Members were predominantly pleased with the EPB and its work in Strategic Management, Relationship Management, Performance Management, Financial and Operational Management and Management of Results. Results of the survey are given in Figure 1, providing insight as to Members views on these areas of the EPB’s work.

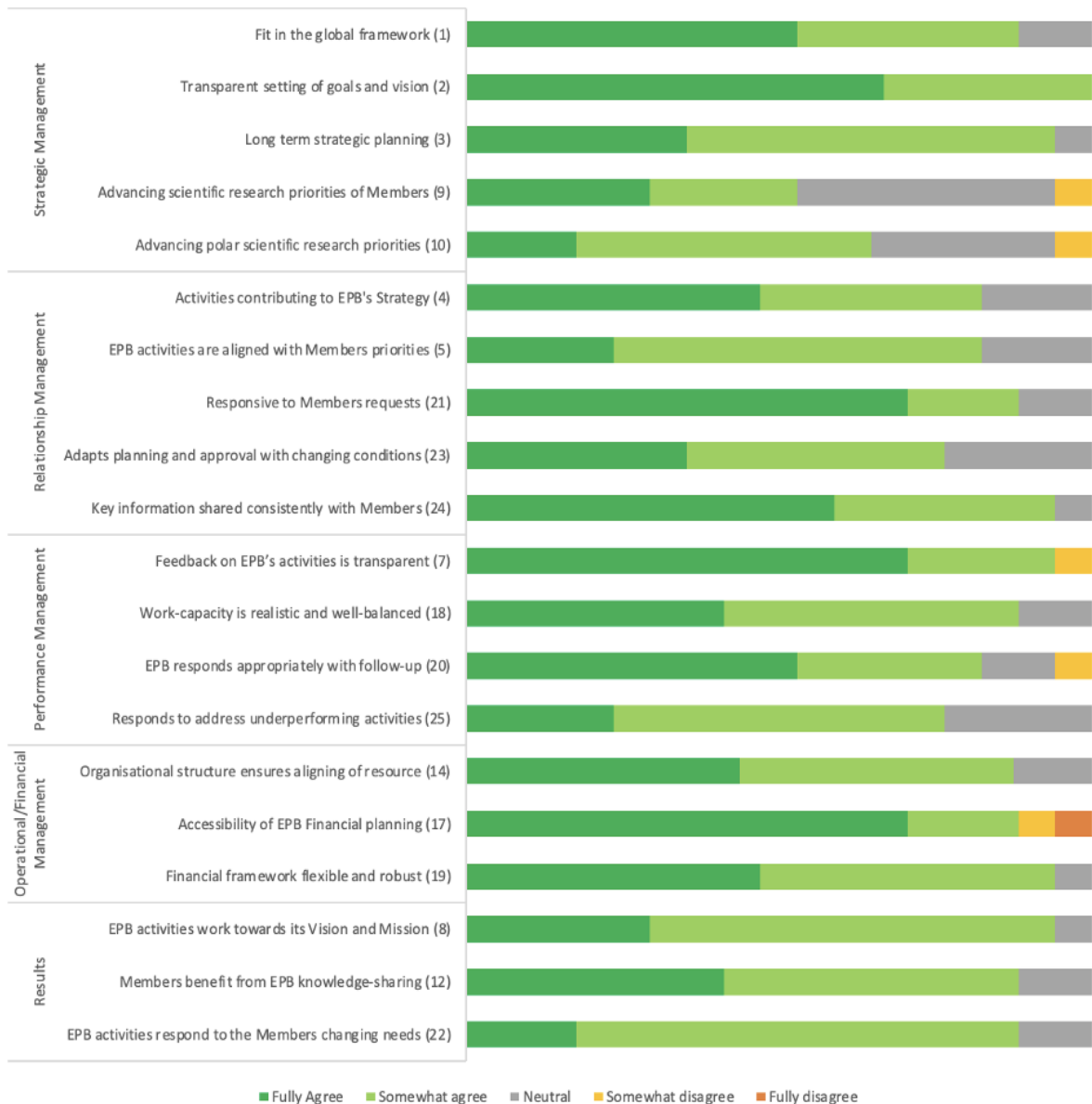
Interviewees noted the extensive EPB **network** as beneficial to their operations. The EPB’s **longevity** and focus on **both polar regions** was appreciated by interviewees, and distinguish it from other organisations, projects or entities. However, interviews revealed that understanding differences between the EPB, the EU Polar Cluster and EU-PolarNet 2 can be challenging for external partners.

Follow-up actions:

The results of the Internal Review will be presented EPB’s Autumn 2021 Plenary Meeting. Action points and suggestions (see Annex 2 for the overview) raised by the **Internal Review** are to be discussed and decided upon at this meeting. Results from the Internal Review will feed into a subsequent **External Review** process, and the process for the development of the next **EPB Strategy (2023-2027)**.



Figure 1: Overview of responses to the EPB Members survey. Questions were grouped under one of the relevant 5 headers (Strategic Management, Relationship Management, Performance Management, Operation/Financial Management and Results) according to the MOPAN 3.0 m modified for the EPB. Each bar represents a multiple choice question, and numbers in parenthesis correspond to individual question numbers in the survey.



2 INTRODUCTION

The European Polar Board (EPB) is an independent, non-profit organisation focused on major strategic priorities in the Arctic and Antarctic. Members include research institutes, logistics operators, funding agencies, scientific academies and government ministries from across Europe. The Internal Review Committee was set up by EPB Plenary to carry out the process, and consisted of A Quesada (Chair), T Gibéryen, K Latola, R Vaikmäe, JB Ørbæk, V Vitale, and P Elshout (EPB Project Officer).

2.1 WHY AN INTERNAL REVIEW?

Within the EPB there is a continuously ongoing effort to review its activities. Most of these reviewing efforts focus on short term and medium term deliverables. The EPB Action List is one of the main tools used for reviewing EPB activities, which is updated and discussed during every Plenary Session. To complement these review efforts, the EPB has conducted a longer term internal review, which is one of the listed milestones of the EPB Strategy 2017-2022. The internal review is also part of the hosting agreement with the NWO (the Dutch Research Council), which hosts the EPB Secretariat in the Hague (the Netherlands).

2.2 METHODOLOGY

The Internal Review Committee chose (an adjusted version of the) MOPAN 3.0 methodology¹ for this report. For this review², the Internal Review Committee has defined key point indicators. This report is based on data gathered using this methodology³.

The MOPAN 3.0 Methodology is specially developed to review international organisations, and can be modified to suit an individual organisation's needs. The methodology typically uses different types of data as input (surveys, interviews and document reviews) to evaluate multiple types of management within an organization (strategic, operational, financial, performance and result management). For each type of management, different key point indicators (KPI's) are identified⁴. The survey, the interviews and the document review are structured by these KPI's. The main tool used for this Internal Review is a detailed online **Survey** of all EPB Members, of these 17 responses were received (out of 28 Members). These **interviews** were conducted with representatives of 10 organisations, with whom the EPB has MoU's with or collaborates with. Furthermore, 60+ **documents** (finance documents, plenary reports, EXCOM reports, Action Group documents, EPB Strategy 2017-2022) provided a working background for preparing both the Survey, the interviews and this review document.

2.2.1 SURVEY

The survey was conducted online, anonymous and consisted of both multiple choice and open questions. Each Member could submit one survey, using input from more representatives (if desired). For the multiple choice questions, this review has used a Likert-scale presenting the outcomes. The five colours represent different categories. The size of the coloured blocks represent the amount of questions that were answered in that specific category. These graphs are based on multiple choice questions from the survey. The figure

¹ See next paragraph for more information on the chosen methodology

² See Annex 4 for the complete overview of key point indicators

³ See Chapter 'Methodology' for more information on types of data used for this report.

⁴ See Annex 4 for the complete overview of KPI's.

below shows the overall appreciation of EPB's work, as a sum of all the responses received from the Member survey:

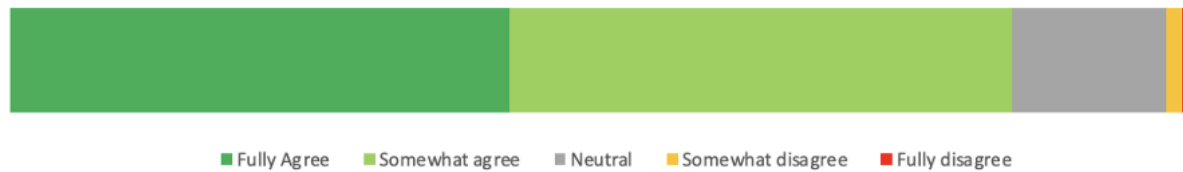


Figure 2: Overview of all Member responses to the EPB Internal Review. Each bar represents a multiple choice question, and numbers in parenthesis correspond to individual question numbers in the EPB Member survey.

2.2.2 INTERVIEWS:

Representatives of 10 organisations and projects that the EPB works closely together with or has MoU's with were interviewed for this review. The interviews were semi-structured, based upon a set of 10 questions developed by the Internal Review Committee. Additionally, the interviews provided an opportunity for input on the general experiences of working with the EPB. Quotes used from the interviewees in this report have been anonymised.

- Participating organisations:
- Association of Polar Early Career Scientists (APECS)
- International Arctic Science Committee (IASC)
- ArcticPASSION
- CHOICE
- European Space Agency (ESA)
- EU PolarNet-2
- International Network for Terrestrial Research and Monitoring in the Arctic (INTERACT III)
- Svalbard Integrated Observing Arctic Earth System (SIOS)
- Southern Ocean Carbon and Heat Impact on Climate (SO-CHIC)
- The Southern Ocean Observing System (SOOS)

2.2.3 DOCUMENT REVIEW:

The Plenary reports (from 2016-2021), EXCOM reports (from 2018-2021), Finance documents (from 2017-2021), the EPB Strategy 2017-2021 and Action Group documents have been used to inform this review as background material and to provide a general insight in how the EPB is organisationally set up, communicates and to analyse the EPB finances.

2.3 REVIEW PROCESS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW EPB STRATEGY

The internal review is the first step in the review process of the EPB. This internal review will be followed up by an external review. The results of these reviews will be taken into account during the development process of the new EPB Strategy 2023-2027. To avoid stakeholder fatigue, a section of the survey is dedicated to gain input for the new EPB Strategy 2023-2027. The input gathered in this specific section is not used for the review, as this will be analysed and used for the development of the new strategy, in combination with the outcomes of the internal and external review.

3 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

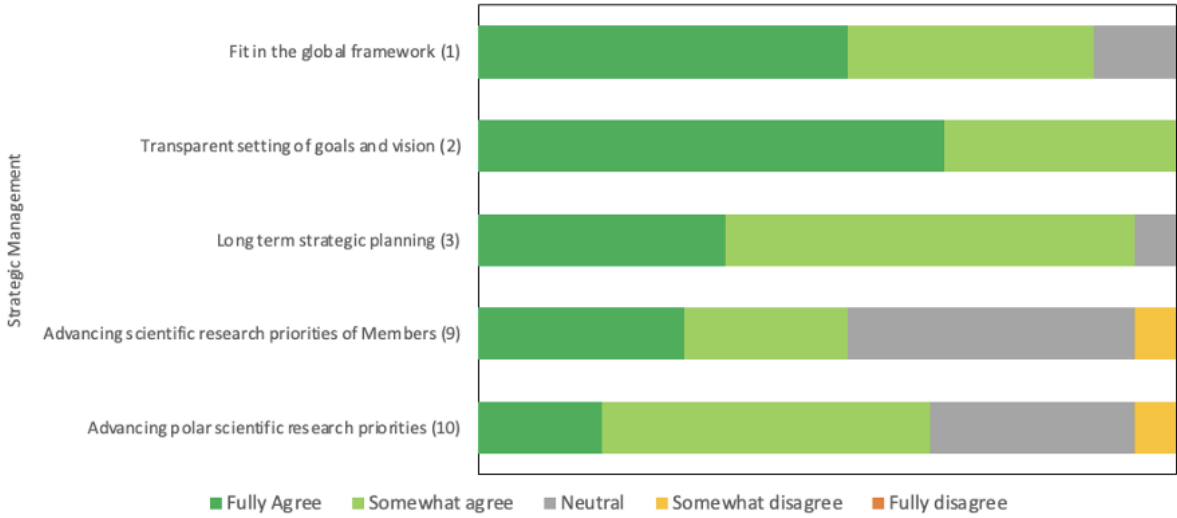


Figure 3: Graph showing results of the survey questions relating to Strategic Management. Each bar represents a multiple choice question, and numbers in parenthesis correspond to individual question numbers in the EPB Member survey.

3.1 WHAT DOES THE EPB ORGANISATIONAL ARCHITECTURE LOOK LIKE?

The EPB consists of a consortium of Members, which is called Plenary. The execution of EPB activities are managed by the Executive Committee, which is an elected subset of the EPB Plenary, who are authorised to make decisions on behalf of the Plenary. The Secretariat implements the vision and decisions taken by the Plenary, and runs the EPB’s day-to-day business from its office in the Hague (the Netherlands) hosted at the Dutch Research Council (NWO).

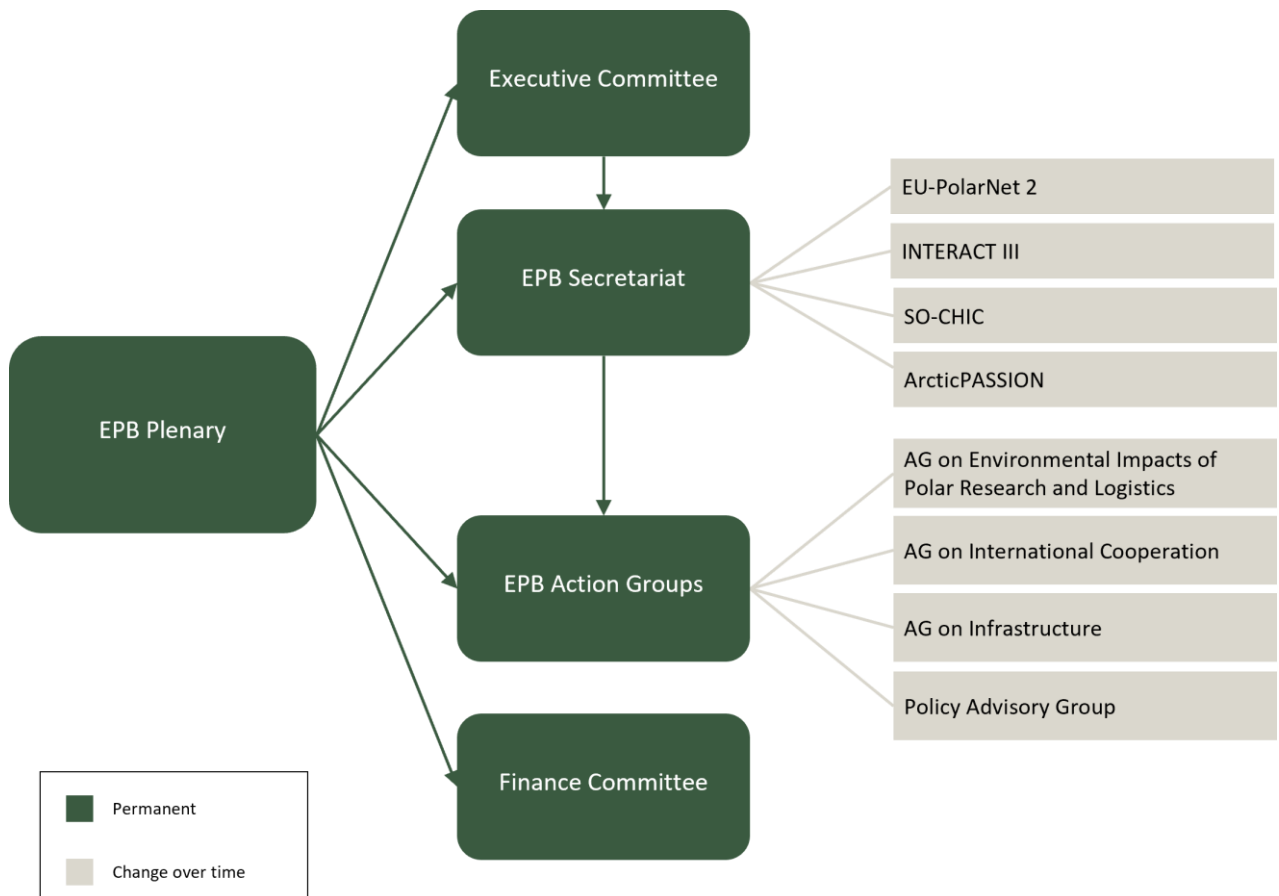


Figure 4: Organisation chart/Organogram for the EPB – denoting the organisational structure

Twice a year, the EPB Members, the Executive Committee and the Secretariat meet during a ‘Plenary Sessions’. During these sessions, the Executive Committee displays the progress of the EPB with the assistance of the Secretariat. Finances (reported by the Financial Committee), activities and milestones are discussed and EPB Members are invited to ask questions, share thoughts or comment on the presentations.

Additionally to the general agenda of Plenary Sessions, sessions often include workshops, network events and presentations by invited speakers who are active in the Polar research community, policy makers or representatives of similar organisations to the EPB from other continents.

During Plenary Sessions, future activities are set out (in compliance with the EPB Strategy 2017-2022), which are then managed and executed by the Executive Committee. The organisational architecture is thus the combination of the EPB Members, the Executive Committee, the Financial Committee and the Secretariat, meeting at least twice a year officially during Plenary sessions (see Figure 4 for the EPB organogram).

3.2 WHAT IS THE EPB’S LONG TERM VISION AND MISSION?

The current EPB Strategy runs from 2017 until 2022 and is based on extensive input from EPB Members. The Strategy its vision and mission set out strategic aims and goals. The general EPB **vision** is to be the strong collective voice of European research in the polar regions, providing independent policy advice at national and international levels. The EPB **mission** is to promote, coordinate and advance European research at high latitudes by providing a single collaborative platform for European polar researchers.

These aims and goals were developed using input from EPB Members via an online survey and several in-person discussion sessions at Plenary meetings before 2017. EPB Members note that they are highly satisfied with the transparency of the process of developing the goals and expected results of the Vision and Mission for the Strategy, and the consultative role that EPB Members were given (see Figure 3, question 2). The mission and vision of the EPB has a long-term component, which according to the EPB Members is highly satisfactory (see Figure 3, question 3).

3.3 LONGEVITY AND FOCUS ON BOTH POLES

The **longevity** and focus on both poles are appreciated by the external organisations that were interviewed for this review. While most projects and organisations are of a temporary nature in the polar research community, the EPB's structure with its Members enables the EPB to be a lasting factor in a changing research landscape. External organisations regard this as a beneficial feature for the internal organisation of the EPB, as it enables the organisation to build up long-term expertise and connections. This long-term expertise can amplify the legacies of past research activities conducted by actors in the European research community (also to avoid duplication). For the internal dynamic this longevity means that different organisations, ministries, research institutes, funding agencies and other EPB Members can form long-lasting relationships to identify and discuss potential cross-cutting solutions to issues being experienced in the European polar research community.

“The long term aspect is very important – an all-round platform that connects”

The **focus on both poles** of the EPB as an organisation enables the EPB to combine knowledge from two distinct places. This results in cross-cutting initiatives in several aspects of the EPB's activities, such as Action Groups synthesising knowledge from the Arctic and Antarctic, or tackling logistical issues in the Action Group in Logistics by setting up databases such as the European Polar Infrastructure Database and hosting of the Due South – Southern Ocean Database. Another example is the Action Group on Environmental Impacts and Logistics, which is producing a synthesis report to define best practices on how to limit environmental impacts for Polar researchers. The report combines input from both poles, thus enabling an exchange of knowledge between the two Polar regions.

3.4 SOLVING CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

The EPB Members fully agree that the structure and mechanisms of the EPB's organisational design is able to solve prevalent cross-cutting issues in the polar research community (See figure 3, question 1). The Action Groups of the EPB are highly valued as a framework to bring together experts with different backgrounds to share knowledge and develop initiatives, reports or other tools that are useful for polar research.

3.5 CONNECTING THE POLES

A prominent aim of the EPB Strategy (2017-2022) is to connect research communities from both poles. Generally EPB Members believe the activities of the EPB support the advancement of scientific research priorities of EPB Members across the full breadth of polar research (thus including both poles) in an inclusive

and well-balanced manner (See figure 3, question 9). A number of the EPB Members answered this question with 'neutral'.

See Action Point 1 and Action Point 3 below this paragraph on how to advance the alignment of EPB activities with the priorities of EPB Members.

EPB Members agree that the EPB has the ability to advance Arctic and Antarctic general scientific research priorities (and not solely the EPB Members scientific priorities) across the full spectrum of polar search (See Figure 3, question 10). To strengthen the alignment of the priorities

"The EPB adds value [to the polar research community] by providing a platform for non-European researchers for within the European research structure and is therefore an important platform for connecting."

of the EPB Members with the advancement of issues across the full breadth of polar research, it was noted in the survey that it could be feasible to proactively underline the benefits of an EPB Membership by sharing more information about the performance and results to EPB Members who have no representatives in the Executive Committee or other EPB groups. The activities of the action groups are noted to be very useful to develop intersectional ideas.

Organisations working with the EPB appreciate the access the EPB provides to connect to European networks of both poles. Every external organisation which was interviewed noted to be aware of the EPB's focus on both poles and saw this as an useful asset of the EPB. However, as many polar organisations are focussed on one specific region or topic, it is often hard for them to understand the full scope of the EPB and its polar focus. Nonetheless, many representatives of interviewed organisations were interested in learning more about the research and activities being undertaken at the opposite pole.

Action Points for Strategic Management:

1. Develop an information system (for example a recurring webinar or newsletter) for non-EPB Members to create more insight in the EPB's activities.
2. Underline benefits of EPB Memberships by sharing results more.
3. Focus not only on operations and infrastructure, but also on research by highlighting research topics of common interest more often. An example would be to invest in the action group on international cooperation or to draw more attention to Antarctica from a European perspective.
4. Creating more interaction between EU-funded projects and EPB Members.

4 OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

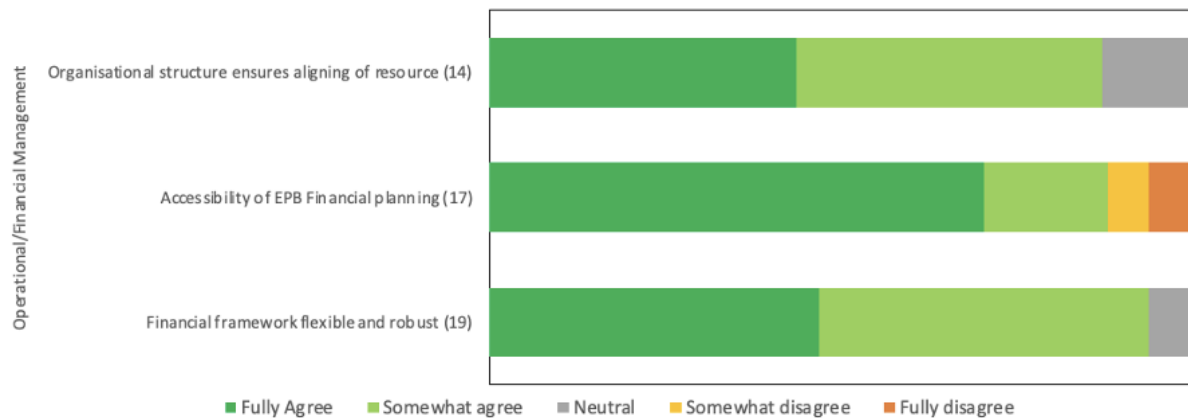


Figure 5: Graph showing results of the survey questions relating to Operational Management. Each bar represents a multiple choice question, and numbers in parenthesis correspond to individual question numbers in the EPB Member survey.

4.1 FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

The EPB receives three streams of income. These financial streams are:

- Fixed annual contributions of EPB Members
- Budgets received from participating in European research programs
- 50.000 euros annually via the NWO host agreement

The EPB is financially stable, with a continuing influx of funds (the annual Member contributions, the budgets received from projects and the NWO host agreement). Since 2016, the EPB has a reserve fund of 100.000 euros (since 2016) to fulfil all its open deliverables, in case the EPB would be terminated.

The Secretariat monitors EPB finances in close collaboration with the Finance Committee. Preliminary to every Plenary Session, the Executive Committee approves the annual financial statements, which are - if satisfactory - then approved by Plenary. The contributions allow the EPB to implement the goals set in its Strategy and employ staff as is required.

According to Plenary, the financial framework of the EPB is robust enough to support its mandate and possible unforeseen changing circumstances (see Figure 5, question 19).

4.2 AGILITY OF THE ORGANISATION

The EPB's financial and human resources enable the organisation to navigate agile through the Polar research community. This is appreciated by external organisations, who especially mention the EPB's Action Groups. Members note to be generally satisfied by the EPB's financial model aligning and supporting financial resources with the EPB's human resources (see Figure 5, question 14).

"Action Groups aren't set in stone, while many projects are. That is a great strength".

4.3 PRESENCE OF THE EPB IN THE POLAR RESEARCH COMMUNITY

External organisations the EPB works with, note that the EPB is very present in the Polar research community and is a reliable network to connect different organisations, projects and experts working in the Polar research community.

However, for many organisations working with the EPB, it is not always easy to distinguish the EPB from the EU Polar Cluster and EU PolarNet. An organogram could help with this, to highlight the different organisational structures of the three organisations and projects (see Action Point 5 and 6).

“It is not always clear what the difference is between the EPB, EU PolarNet and the EU Polar Cluster.”

4.4 OFFICIAL STATUS OF THE EPB AND FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY

The EPB is registered as a non-profit organisation in the Netherlands. To legally comply with this registered status as non-profit organisation, the EPB is obliged to meet certain standards of transparency regarding its finances, not only for Members, but for the general public as well.

For this review, the focus is largely on how Members experience the financial transparency of the EPB, as the external review will focus more on the accessibility (and accountability) of EPB finances to the general public.

There are several ways that enable Members to access the EPB’s financial data.

- Publicly accessible ‘about us’ page on the EPB website (annual accounts and budgets)
- Sign-in access to all EPB Member representatives to the Members area of the EPB website (accounts presented at each Plenary meeting and current and future budgets)
- Presented in Plenary in person and presented via meeting papers (accounts presented at each Plenary meeting and current and future budgets)
- Access at request from the secretariat (all financial information)
- Via volunteering at the Finance Committee (all financial information)

Plenary noted in the Member survey they preferred to access the financial data via the presentations of the meeting papers during Plenary sessions and via the EPB Member Area at the EPB website (question 15). According to EPB Members, the financial data is accessible enough (see Figure 5, question 17). Despite the generally highly favourable feedback from Members on the accessibility of the financial data, some Members note the data is not accessible enough. See Action Point 7 for the emphasizing of the different manners to access the financial data.

4.5 FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

From analysing the transparency of the financial resources, it appears that the EPB’s decision-making is consistent with its strategic priorities, as all finances contribute to development of cohesive actions that realise the strategic priorities of the EPB, such as engaging with the Polar research community via its four action groups, facilitating an infrastructure for EPB Members to meet and share knowledge via Plenary sessions and by hiring staff to work on deliverables of European Polar research projects such as ARCTIC Passion, SO-CHIC, EU PolarNet 2 and the EU Polar Cluster.

According to the financial documents of the EPB, the resources are generally allocated as planned. However, general global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic have forced the EPB to re-allocate some of its financial resources, as (for example) the travel-costs declined. The surplus of travel costs generated in the EPB's budget has partially been used to strengthen the EPB's online infrastructure, to enable Members to meet virtually rather than in-person. Despite partially re-allocating resources, there is still a surplus of the budget that can be reallocated to respond to relevant needs identified by Members to benefit the European polar research community (see Action Point 8). It is important for the EPB to ensure its income is spent on relevant polar activities as part of its responsibilities towards its status as a non-profit organisation.

Action Points for Operational Management:

5. Provide an organogram of the structure of the EPB.
6. Provide an organogram that shows the relationship (and differences) between the EPB, EU Polar Cluster and EU PolarNet to underline the EPB's role.
7. Communicate more clearly how EPB Members can access EPB finances. An instruction leaflet could be useful, listing the options and how to access financial data.
8. Reallocate budgets that have not been spent due to the COVID-19 pandemic, potentially on a new communication strategy.

5 RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

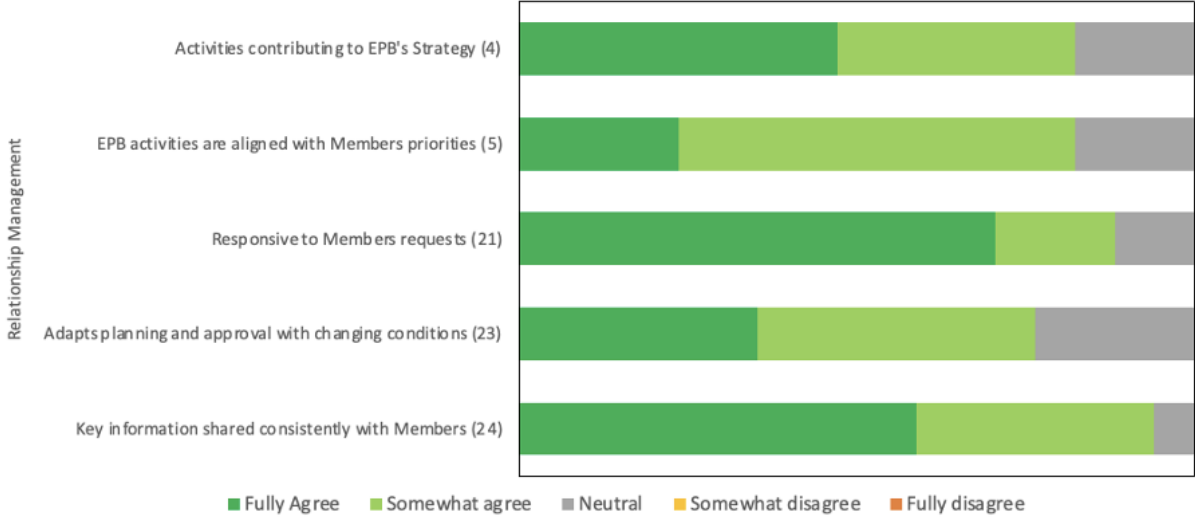


Figure 6: Graph showing results of the survey questions relating to Relationship Management. Each bar represents a multiple choice question, and numbers in parenthesis correspond to individual question numbers in the EPB Member survey.

5.1 EPB ACTIVITIES AND PLANNING FOR EPB MEMBERS

Meetings, network events and the action groups enable the EPB in being up to date with the activities of Members. EPB Members agree that activities of the EPB align with their institutional priorities (see Figure 6, question 5).

To spawn more cohesion between the EPB’s activities and the institutional priorities of Members, most Members note in the open survey question number 6 that more systematic interaction and discussions would be beneficial to the alignment of priorities (see Action Point 9 and 10). This would not only be beneficial to the alignment of priorities of the EPB and individual institutional priorities of EPB Members, but could also harbour stronger relations between Members and the aligning of their institutional priorities.

Although less frequent, in this open question (survey question number 6) there were also concerns raised about the human resource capacity of EPB Members with a limited human resources to engage in increased EPB interaction in addition to the bi-annual Plenary, the participation in the Action Groups and network events. Another concern raised was the increased workload on the Secretariat, in case of more EPB events.

5.2 THE EPB AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS THE EPB WORKS CLOSELY TOGETHER WITH

According to representatives from external organisations that have been interviewed for this review, the network of the EPB is valued for sharing knowledge and connecting to (high-level) policy makers. This could be interpreted as the EPB as an operative internal network that connects EPB Members with each other, and with (for example) policy makers.

5.3 EPB RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, the EPB was quick to respond to the needs of EPB Members and the European polar research community. The EPB hosted for example an online meeting for all the projects that are part of the European Polar Cluster, in which they were asked to share their best practices and experienced issues regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Members note to be satisfied on how the EPB adapts their planning and approval procedures when conditions change (see Figure 6, question 23). This underlines the COVID-19 response adaptation of the EPB and shows the EPB's ability to 'shift gears' when circumstances change and to enable its staff (human resource) to allocate time to the organising of relevant events in changing circumstances.

5.4 MULTIDISCIPLINARY POLAR KNOWLEDGE

The internal activities of the EPB have a multidisciplinary angle due to of the participants in the Action Groups, Plenary sessions and partnerships with other organisations. The Strategy 2017-2022 aims to bring together many actors in the European polar research community, as a relevant actor in the polar community to advance research. According to Members, the internal activities of the EPB contribute in a highly satisfactory manner to achieving these aims of the Strategy 2017-2022 (see Figure 6, question 4).

The Members fully agree that the results on advancing European research are consistently shared. They note to be satisfied with the key-information they receive regarding budgeting, management and results (see Figure 6, question 24). According to question 21, Members are content with the responsiveness of the EPB to their requests (see Figure 6, question 21).

Action Points for Relationship Management:

9. Provide Members with the opportunity to present their past, current and future activities on a systematic basis to other Members.
10. Create a follow-up document with specific actions and implementations to the EPB Strategy 2017-2022

6 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

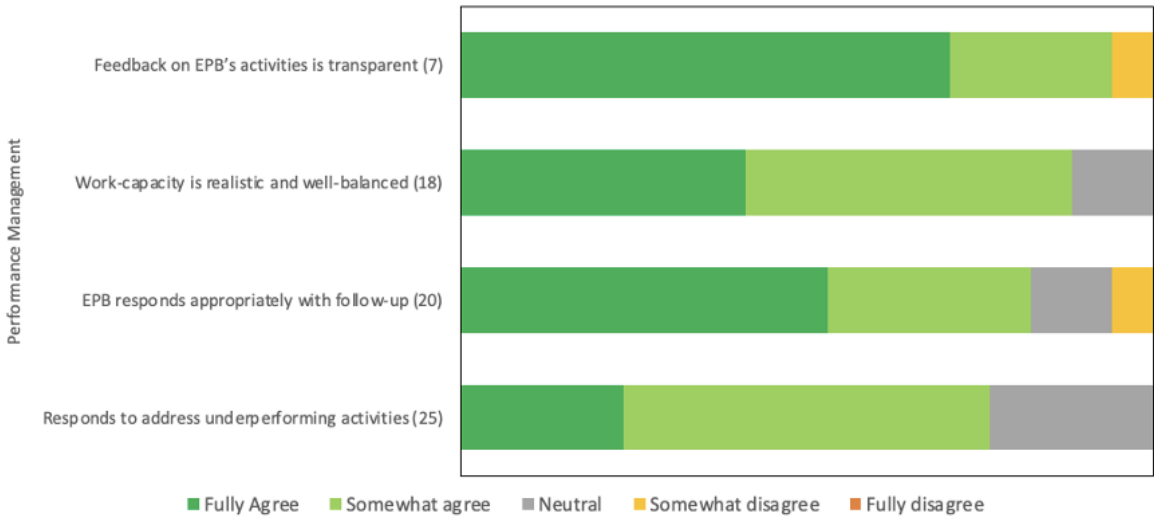


Figure 7: Results of the survey questions relating to Performance Management. Each bar represents a multiple choice question, and numbers in parenthesis correspond to individual question numbers in the EPB Member survey.

6.1 GENERAL RESULTS SINCE LAUNCH OF THE EPB STRATEGY 2017-2022

Since the installation of the new Strategy (2017-2022), the EPB’s activity has increased significantly. To advance, promote and coordinate polar sciences, the EPB is now actively part of four major EU funded programs (SO-CHIC, ArcticPASSION, EU PolarNet and INTERACT III). Within these projects, the Secretariat focusses on deliverables that have organisational aspects, such as organising press briefings and hosting webinar series, to connect relevant actors and share relevant knowledge. The Secretariat is solely responsible for deliverables with an organisational aspect within these projects and avoids deliverables that concern research and scientific content, as these are more suitable for research institutes.

Furthermore, the EPB has welcomed new members (Arctic Centre, Thule Institute, Luxembourg's Polar Program, Arctic Research Centre at Umeå University and TUBITAK Marmara Research Center Polar Research Institute) and spoken in an advisory capacity to (high-level) policy makers to stress the importance of well-funded and cared for polar science.

In the introduction of the EPB’s 2017-2022 Strategy, it is noted that the EPB aims ‘to consolidate and further strengthen the EPB’s standing as a leader within European and international polar research communities’ (EPB Strategy 2017-2022). This refers to the EPB’s aim to use its European research infrastructure for a wider, global perspective. Therefore, the EPB has several MoU’s with non-European polar research organisations to connect the European research infrastructure with non-European actors in the polar research community. Working together with international organisations such as IASC, SCAR and APECS opens up the possibility to connect the European research infrastructure with the global polar research community, which is a target described in the EPB’s implementation plan (2017-2022).

The EPB’s Strategy outlines the direction for the EPB (its mission is to coordinate, promote and advance European polar research). The vision of the EPB is to ‘be the strong collective voice of European research in the polar regions, providing independent policy advice at national and international levels’. The Strategy

mainly outlines the EPB's structure and how this contributes to fulfilling its vision and mission. In the implementation plan, a more detailed version of Action Areas is outlined to comply with the EPB mission, focussing on:

- How to align polar priorities
- Infrastructures
- Data, information and observations
- Policy advice
- Representing the polar research community in Europe
- Representing European polar research internationally
- Outreach and communications
- Progress monitoring

This detailed description leads to more defined goals and targets, such as developing an online portal hosted on the EPB website with European polar infrastructures to enable European and non-European researchers and institutions to access the European research infrastructure. Respondents to the EPB Member survey fully agree that the EPB's work capacity is able to fulfil the EPB's targets and goals as described in the Strategy 2017-2022. (see Figure 7, question 18).

During Plenary Sessions, the progress of the EPB is discussed, using the Activity List, which is a tool to describe and check the aims, goals and targets that have been achieved, and which ones are being worked on. Plenary sessions are also used to draft new aims and goals, or to adjust them to changing circumstances. These new aims, goals and targets are based on the data presented during the Plenary Sessions. Members fully agree with this way of monitoring the EPB's activities, according to the EPB Member survey (see Figure 7, question 7). When Members share feedback and follow-ups, the EPB responds appropriately according to these requests (see Figure 7, question 20). Although the median in the response to this question was 'fully agree', there was one respondent signalling to be unsatisfied with the response of the EPB to following-up and feedback. Therefore, it might be a suggestion to increase communication on how feedback and follow-ups are processed within the EPB (see Action Point 11 and 12).

Identifying specific aims and goals are important to monitor the performance of activities. As the EPB's activities mainly consist out of three sub-categories (general EPB activities such as Plenary, activities carried out by the EPB action groups and the fulfilling of deliverables from EU Projects), below these three categories are (in short) described to show how potential underperforming activities are monitored (and responded to).

6.2 ENSURING SUCCESS OF EPB ACTIVITIES WITHIN ACTION GROUPS

The EPBs Action Groups have very specific aims and goals, described in its deliverables in the ToR. When all these deliverables are fulfilled and executed, the Action Group is terminated. An example is the Action Group on Environmental Impacts and Logistics, which has the specific aim to produce a synthesis report on best practices to limit the environmental impacts of polar research. The performance of this Action Group is largely measured by the result and impact of its final deliverable (which is a synthesis report for Members). When finished, the report will be discussed by the Executive Committee, the Action Group itself and Plenary to evaluate its significance.

6.3 ENSURING SUCCESS OF EPB ACTIVITIES INTERNALLY

The EPB has a structure in place to monitor the ensuring of success of EPB activities internally. The Secretariat has two meetings every week to discuss the internal progress of the Secretariat, general EPB and Project deliverables and to discuss the managing and organising of upcoming events. Individual action groups have meetings to discuss the progress on their deliverables, share relevant updates regarding the topic of the action group and exchange knowledge. The Secretariat is involved in the action groups and shares the latest updates regarding Secretariat meetings and action group meetings monthly with the Executive Committee. From these meetings, notes are taken which are uploaded at the EPB Members area. The Executive Committee then reports to Plenary every half year to discuss the EPB's progress, using the Action List as a track record.

6.4 ENSURING SUCCESS OF EPB ACTIVITIES WITHIN PROJECTS

As projects are executed by many organisations and researchers, they typically divide deliverables. The projects the EPB participates in, are funded by Horizon2020 of the European Commission (EC). The progress of these deliverables is checked and monitored by departments of the EC. Underperformance will therefore be noted by the EC, as they monitor the projects. However, in case of any underperformance this will also be noted by Plenary, as this will show in the Action List and the discussion during Plenary sessions of the activities on the list. Therefore, for the Projects there is a double checking structure in place, as both the EPB and the EC are keen to ensure the success of these activities.

6.5 RESPONSE TO POTENTIAL UNDERPERFORMING ACTIVITIES

When underperforming activities are identified, via one of the mechanisms listed above, the activity is assessed by either the Executive Committee or Plenary (depending on what kind of activity is identified as potentially underperforming). In the Action List is shown which actor is responsible for the execution of the activity (either a person, group or organisation). Therefore, this actor can be held accountable by the Executive Committee or Plenary. In practice this means that there will be a discussion with the responsible actors on what is needed to have the particular activity with the desired performance completed. EPB Members note in the EPB Member survey to agree with how underperforming activities are identified and responded to (see Figure 7, question 25).

Action Points for Performance Management:

11. Increase communication on how follow-ups and feedback is processed within the EPB via for example a process- leaflet.
12. Explaining the protocol on how to assess activities and respond to underperforming activities via an organogram to create a more structured insight on how the EPB adapts and responds to activities that underperform.

7 MANAGEMENT OF RESULTS

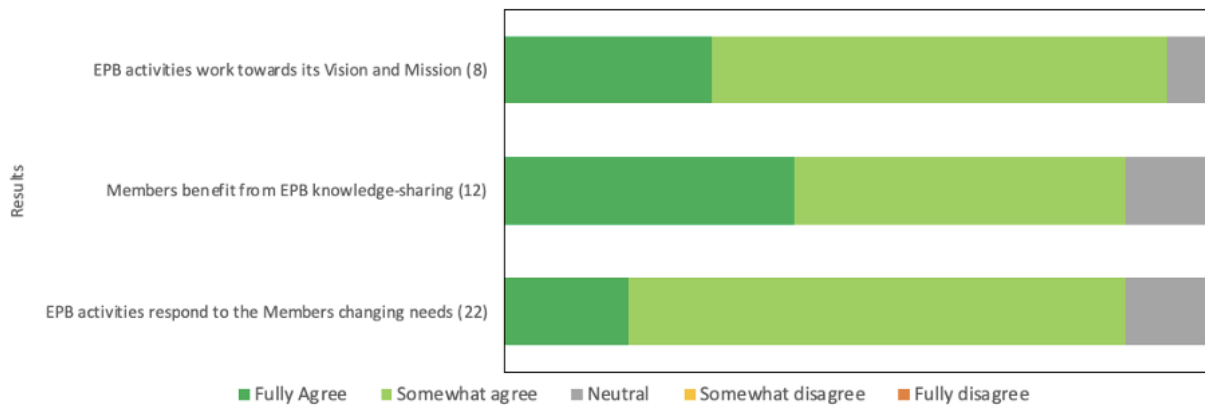


Figure 8: Results of the survey questions relating to Management of Results. Each bar represents a multiple choice question, and numbers in parenthesis correspond to individual question numbers in the EPB Member survey.

7.1 SOFT POWER

The EPB is an organisation which exercises so called ‘soft power’ (connecting experts in the polar regions, and promoting and advancing multidisciplinary knowledge). Ideally, this knowledge is transferred to policy makers and stakeholders. Soft power is difficult to measure. However, one of the most important aspects of being able to advance, coordinate and promote polar research is by creating an accessible network and platform, where experts can share their experiences, identify needs and define aims and goals, while using the European polar research infrastructure. These identified needs and aims are then turned into interventions. According to Plenary, EPB interventions and activities work towards its stated goals and results as portrayed in the vision and mission of the EPB Strategy 2017-2022 (see Figure 8, question 8).

7.2 MAINTAINING AND STRENGTHENING THE EPB NETWORK

In the EPB Member survey, respondents were asked to share ideas on how to further strengthen the EPB’s ability to align its activities with the priorities of the Members. Suggestions Members gave were: opening up the possibility for Members to present their recent work to the other Members, or to create a document or roadmap in which the priorities of the Members are individually presented. The sharing of knowledge is, according to members, highly beneficial (see Figure 8, question 12). According to survey question 13, Members prefer to share knowledge and results via in-person meetings. Gathering more data and knowledge regarding the priorities of Members could help the EPB to respond even more accordingly to the changing needs of Members, although Members note to be generally satisfied with the EPB’s response when their needs change (see Figure 8, question 22 and Action Point 13 and 14).

“By bringing all the member organisations together - developing environmental strategies etc., the EPB helps a lot with polar programs in Europe”

International cross-disciplinary events, the Action Groups and webinars such as the ASM3 series are noted as beneficial to sustain strong relationships within the EPB and provide an accessible European polar research community.

EPB and the setting of (national) polar research priorities

The EPB helps setting priorities of polar development goals and objectives, as it contributes to the white paper process of EU PolarNet which led to five different polar calls on cross cutting issues. These polar calls have collected 45 million euros, available for polar researchers. External organisations note the EPB as an influence in the setting of research priorities.

*Action Points for **Management of Results**:*

13. Create an opportunity for EPB Members to present their latest work and future plans on a fixed periodic basis to each other (this was also suggested in the chapter: Relationship Management).
14. Create a roadmap in which the priorities of the EPB Members are individually presented and share this roadmap amongst EPB Members.

8 ANNEX 1: OVERVIEW OF ACTION POINTS

Action Points for Strategic Management:

1. Develop an information system (for example a recurring webinar or newsletter) for non-EPB Members to create more insight in the EPB's activities.
2. Underline benefits of EPB Memberships by sharing results more.
3. Focus not only on operations and infrastructure, but also on research by highlighting research topics of common interest more often. An example would be to invest in the action group on international cooperation or to draw more attention to Antarctica from a European perspective.
4. Creating more interaction between EU-funded projects and EPB Members.

Action Points for Operational Management:

5. Provide an organogram of the structure of the EPB.
6. Provide an organogram that shows the relationship (and differences) between the EPB, EU Polar Cluster and EU PolarNet to underline the EPB's role.
7. Communicate more clearly how EPB Members can access EPB finances. An instruction leaflet could be useful, listing the options and how to access financial data.
8. Reallocate budgets that have not been spent due to the COVID-19 pandemic, potentially on a new communication strategy.

Action Points for Relationship Management:

9. Provide Members with the opportunity to present their past, current and future activities on a systematic basis to other Members.
10. Create a follow-up document with specific actions and implementations to the EPB Strategy 2017-2022.

Action Points for Performance Management:

11. Increase communication on how follow-ups and feedback is processed within the EPB.
12. Setting up a protocol on how to assess activities and respond to underperforming activities to create a more structured insight on how the EPB adapts and responds to activities that underperform.

Action Points for Management of Results:

13. Create an opportunity for EPB Members to present their latest work and future plans on a fixed periodic basis to each other (this was also suggested in the chapter: Relationship Management).
14. Create a roadmap in which the priorities of the EPB Members are individually presented and share this roadmap amongst EPB Members.

9 ANNEX 2: OVERVIEW OF THE KPIs

<i>Type of management</i>	Aligned KPIs	Informal wording of KPI	Questions answered per KPI
<i>Strategic Management</i>	KPI 1: The EPB's organisational architecture and the financial framework enable mandate implementation and achievement of expected results	1.1 Does the general organisational structure of the EPB ensure the achievement of implementing and achieving expected results (such as safeguarding healthy organisational finances and a decent long-term vision?	KPI 1.1: Does the strategic plan of the EPB's intended results entail a longterm vision/mission? KPI 1.2: In what manner is the EPB's organisational architecture congruent with a longterm vision? KPI 1.3: What does the financial framework the EPB look like and is this framework able to implement the mandate of the EPB?
	KPI 2: Structures and mechanisms support the implementation of global frameworks for cross-cutting issues at all levels.	1.2 The EPB organisational structure is able to help solve cross-cutting issues in the polar science community.	KPI 2.1: In what way does the EPB's long term vision and strategic plan align with other international institutions, such as the EMB's and its Asian and South American counterparts? KPI 2.2: What kind of mechanisms and structures does the EPB have to develop cross cutting initiatives connecting intuitions/bodies/strategies?

<p><i>Operational Management</i></p>	<p>KPI 3: The operating model and human and financial resources support relevance and agility.</p>	<p>The EPB's design and activities enable its human and financial resources to deliver relevant work, while being able to adapt to changing circumstances.</p>	<p>KPI 3.1 In what manner are the organisational structure and staffing ensure that human and financial resources are continuously aligned and adjusted to key functions? KPI 3.2: How are the EPB's resources mobilised and in what manner are they aligned with its strategic priorities?</p>
	<p>KPI 4: Organisational systems are cost and value-conscious and enable financial transparency and accountability.</p>	<p>The EPB spends its budgets wisely and makes sure income and spending are accessible to EPB Members and others.</p>	<p>KPI 4.1: Are EPB members sufficiently informed about the financial planning/accounting/administration of the EPB? KPI 4.2: Is the decision-making consistent with the strategic priorities of the EPB? KPI 4.3: Are the allocated resources actually disbursed as planned?</p>

<p><i>Relationship Management</i></p>	<p>KPI 5: Operational planning and intervention design tools support relevance and agility within [membership] partnership.</p>	<p>EPB planning and activities need to fit the (research) aims of the EPB Members. Therefore, the EPB needs to be able to adapt to possible changing needs by identifying them and organising activities.</p>	<p>KPI 5.1: Do the interventions of the EPB correspond with national/regional priorities? KPI 5.2: To what extent does the capacity of the EPB suffice to implement its mandate and strategies?</p>
	<p>KPI 6: Plenary procedures are adequate and directed at ensuring EPB's relevance and the best use of available resources.</p>	<p>Plenary procedures are effective and help the EPB to set out a course that is relevant to the Polar research community (and especially for EPB Members).</p>	<p>KPI 6.1: How does the EPB modify their planning and approval procedures when conditions change? KPI 6.2: In what manner are the partnerships of the EPB explicitly of comparative advantage (e.g. technical knowledge, convening power/partnerships, policy dialogue/advocacy)? KPI 6.3: How do the various activities of the EPB contribute to a synergy of disciplines within the EPB? KPI 6.4: Via which mechanisms is key information of the EPB (analysis, budgeting, management, results etc.) shared with strategic and implementation partners—and is this an ongoing, consistent practice?</p>
<p><i>Performance Management</i></p>	<p>KPI 7: The focus on results is strong, transparent and explicitly geared towards function.</p>	<p>EPB efforts are made with clear results in mind and effectively executed.</p>	<p>KPI 7.1: How is the EPB's leadership ensuring the application of a wider perspective when focussing on the performance of the EPB? KPI 7.2: Are the goals and targets realistic, regarding the capacity of the EPB? KPI 7.3: How does the EPB generate performance data and how is this data monitored?</p>

			<p>KPI 7.4: To what extent is the performance data of the EPB used in planning and decision making and shared transparently?</p>
	<p>KPI 8: The organisation applies evidence-based planning and programming.</p>	<p>The EPB uses input and data to design a realistic planning and activities.</p>	<p>KPI 8.1: Is there a mechanism that evaluates the EPB independently and if so—how is this structured/designed? KPI 8.2: How are underperforming interventions identified, tracked and assessed? KPI 8.3: How does the EPB incorporate evidence into its strategy and establishing of goals? KPI 8.4: How is accountability structured within the EPB, and is this ensuring responses, follow-ups and use for evaluation recommendations? KPI 8.5: How is evaluation-data used for follow-ups and recommendations on best practices and lessons learned?</p>

<p>Results</p>	<p>KPI 9: EPB’s objectives are achieved, and results contribute to normative and cross-cutting goals.</p>	<p>The EPB’s goals are achieved and they contribute to uplifting the quality of polar research, while prioritising the needs of its Members.</p>	<p>KPI 9.1: Do interventions of the EPB achieve their stated results? KPI 9.2: In what manner do the interventions of the EPB contribute to significant changes in national development policies and programs, or reform systems? KPI 9.4: Are the interventions of the EPB helping regarding the improvement of cross cutting issues?</p>
	<p>KPI 10: EPB activities are relevant to the needs and priorities of Members, and the organisation works towards results in areas within its mandate.</p>	<p>The EPB’s goals are achieved and they contribute to uplifting the quality of polar research, while prioritising the needs of its Members.</p>	<p>KPI 10.2: Do the interventions of the EPB help contribute to the realisation of national development goals and objectives?</p>

