

TOWARDS A SHARED ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION SYSTEM (SEIS) IN THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD

FIRST INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT

27 September 2011

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PROJECT SYNOPSIS

Project Title:	TOWARDS A SHARED ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION SYSTEM (SEIS) IN THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD
Project Number:	C-210629
Date Financing Agreement:	27/11/2009
Country:	REGION NEIGHBOURHOOD
Typology of Regional Programme:	HYBRID REGIONAL
Configuration of Regional Programme:	9+7 COUNTRIES
Start Date – actual:	09/12/2009
End Date - planned:	09/06/2014
End Date - likely:	09/06/2014
Primary Commitment:	€5.746.500

• Project Background

The Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) is an EU initiative to modernise and simplify the collection, exchange and use of the data and information required for the design and implementation of environmental policy.

The ENPI-SEIS project was launched to help protect the environment in the European Neighbourhood region by improving capacities of the relevant authorities in the ENP East countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) and Russian Federation and in the ENP South countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria and Tunisia) in the domain of monitoring, data management, assessment and indicator-based reporting on the environment.

Good and timely information is needed to support policy development and implementation, guide allocation of financial resources, support environmental democracy and implementation of international agreements dealing with transboundary environmental issues. These issues are on the agendas of both the Union for the Mediterranean and the Eastern Partnership.

• Project Intervention Logic

Overall Objective (OO):

Promote the protection of the environment in the countries of the ENPI area.

Specific Objectives (SOs):

1. Identify or further develop environmental indicators and scorecards – suitable for the design and review of environmental policies, supporting the monitoring and compliance with various national, regional and international obligations and targets.
2. Improve capacities in the field of monitoring, collection, storage, assessment, and reporting of environmental data in the relevant environmental authorities including the national statistical systems, in compliance with reporting obligations to international agreements and in coordination with relevant regional initiatives.
3. Promote the basis for the future setting up of National and Regional Environmental Information Systems in line with the EU SEIS principles.
4. Track progress of the regional environmental initiatives (ENP, Eastern Partnership, Horizon 2020).

Main Activity Areas:

1. INDICATORS
2. DATA FLOWS
3. SEIS INFRASTRUCTURE
4. ASSESSMENT
5. COMMUNICATION
6. MANAGEMENT, NETWORKING AND COORDINATION

Outputs for ENP East and Russian Federation:

1. Core Set of updated and refined regional Indicators (CSI).
2. Regular data flows established for a selected number of topics.
3. Building SEIS through gradual integration of existing data and information systems.
- 4.1. Trained experts in the field of environmental reporting and indicators in line with EU/EEA methods and tools.
- 4.2. Reporting contribution covering the identified priority areas as part of EEA reporting cycle.
- 5.1. Newsletters.
- 5.2. Indicators and reports produced available on line.
- 6.1. Environment and statistics networks engaged.
- 6.2. Improved partnerships with regional and international institutions and bodies.

Outputs for ENP South:

1. Core Set of updated and refined regional Indicators (CSI).
2. Regionally agreed lists of indicators for the priority areas of Horizon 2020 (CSI for H2020).
3. Regular data flows in place for the three priority areas of H2020.
4. Building SEIS through gradual integration of existing data and information systems.
- 4.1. Trained experts in the field of environmental reporting and indicators in line with EU/EEA methods and tools.
- 4.2. Biennial synthesis progress report.
- 4.3. 5-year progress report under H2020.
5. 1. Newsletters.
- 5.2. Indicators and reports produced available on line.
- 6.1. Environment and statistics networks engaged.
- 6.2. Improved partnerships with regional and international institutions and bodies.

Target groups: The ministries, government agencies and statistical offices responsible for the production, storage, dissemination and assessment of environmental data.

Project duration: 54 months

• Main Partners and Stakeholders

The main partners for cooperation at the national level during the project implementation are the environmental and statistical organisations leading in the field of environmental information. All partner countries have nominated two National Focal Points (NFPs) from the environment and statistical authorities as main partners for cooperating under the ENPI-SEIS project. Improving cooperation, communication and data exchange among the environmental and statistical networks in the countries and the regions is a major goal of the ENPI-SEIS project. Other partners would also be involved and links to synergy activities pursued depending on the specificity of each national environmental information network.

At international level, UNEP/MAP and UNECE are identified as key partners for the project implementation based on their long-standing experience in working in the regions; there is a close collaboration envisaged also with other important stakeholders, such as the Black Sea Commission. Following the close collaboration with UNEP/MAP and UNECE during the inception phase for the production of SEIS State-of-Play reports for both regions, the EEA is expecting further input and involvement of UNECE and UNEP/MAP in the project activities with a view to establish long-term cooperation and development of SEIS in the ENP region.

In the work on the project the EEA is supported by international consortia with strong regional networks, led by Zoë environment network in Geneva for the countries of ENP East and Russian Federation (the East) and by Umweltbundesamt GmbH based in Vienna for the countries of ENP South (the South).

As many of the countries are negotiating their association agreements with the EU, the project will strive to support approximation with the respective EU legislation as applicable, such as the selected part of the *acquis communautaire* including framework directives and instruments (e.g. the EU Water Framework Directive, the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive, the INSPIRE Directive etc.).

• Organisation of the work

The overall project coordination will be ensured by the following groups:

- **Management Group (MG):** bringing together nominated representatives from relevant EC services (DEVCO, EEAS, ENV, ESTAT¹, JRC² and RTD), UNEP/MAP³ and EEA project coordination team. The MG is expected to assess at least two times a year the status of project implementation, to discuss the main challenges and difficulties encountered and to decide on the future activities. The preparation of the annual Steering Committee meetings (where the partner countries are invited) will also be a responsibility of the MG.
- **Steering Committee (SC):** bringing together the Management Group members and representatives of the partner ENP countries and Russian Federation. The SC is expected to meet once per year, preferably back-to-back with one of the MG meetings (tentatively November). The SC meetings will facilitate dialogue and communication with the ENP

¹ Eurostat: Statistical Office of the European Union - <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

² Joint Research Centre - <http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/jrc/index.cfm>

³ As agreed during the project coordination meeting on 23 March 2010

countries and Russian Federation on issues of common interests for the execution of the project and will, at the same time, bring the countries' perspective into the implementation process. SC is expected to have an active role in the identification of priorities to be addressed, in mobilising national capacities for project execution, as well as in commenting and endorsing the various outputs so they better respond to country specific needs.

- **Operational groups:** concerning the ENP South component of the project, the **H2020Review, Monitoring and Research sub-group (RMR)** was identified as the platform for annual dialogue and review of progress with the countries. The costs of the RMR meeting in March 2011 were covered by the ENPI Mediterranean Environment Programme (MEP) and it is expected that subject to the Contracting Authority approval, this will be the case for the 2012 meeting as well.

For the ENP South component, discussion with **UNEP/MAP** is still on-going on relaunching joint work plan with EEA, covering also activities within ENPI-SEIS project.

As indicated more in detail in the section 2.5, the EEA-UNEP/MAP Joint Work Plan is still under preparation, and it was agreed during the July meeting and confirmed when discussing the draft Plan to include an activity on H2020 indicators and ecosystem approach.

At the RMR meeting held on 30-31 March 2011 in Copenhagen, it was agreed to create a Core Group for Research under H2020, to be led by DG Research. The official request should be submitted to the H2020 SC meeting in early 2012.

Concerning the ENP East and Russian Federation component of the project, EEA together with UNECE/Committee on Environment Policy has engaged in discussion of relevant activities in the countries through the **Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators**. The work with the Task Force will cover activities on indicators and underpinning data flows under the project. This forum will be used for regular discussion and assessment of progress under the Eastern Partnership project. Close links will be also maintained with UNECE/WGEMA group in order to streamline efforts and complement activities carried out in the region.

1. REPORTING PERIOD JANUARY-SEPTEMBER 2011

The first interim progress report covers the period from January to mid-September 2011 and its structure follows the approved Terms of Reference as annexed to the project contract. This report is building upon the activities launched during the inception phase and new ones initiated in 2011, in line with the timetable of activities for the implementation phase of the project (attached in Annex 1).

Given the delay in completion of the Inception phase (Inception report was officially approved by the Contracting Authority on 26 January 2011) following slower staff recruitment and kick-off activities in 2010, the project implementation phase was slightly postponed into early 2011. Subsequently EEA asked DG DEVCO for approval to submit the first progress report later than the initially planned 18th month since the start of the project (i.e. September rather than June 2011). Approval for this was given by the Contracting Authority on 21 June 2011.

The objectives for the first implementation period of ENPI-SEIS project from January to mid-September 2011 were focussed on establishing close contacts with the partner countries in ENP South, ENP East and Russian Federation involving major regional networks and stakeholders into dialogue, launching the country visits to the partner countries in order to draw common themes for further regional activities and the development of indicators, and strengthening the project team within EEA activities, as well as aligning to the internal administrative and financial procedures.

The work performed during the reporting period is presented in section 2 for ENP South and section 3 for ENP East and Russian Federation further below.

1.1. Management and coordination activities, covering risk management

The activities undertaken within the ENPI-SEIS project have a rather wide impact and cover a number of planned and on-going activities in the environment area on national and regional level, therefore the extension of Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) principles and practice to the ENP South, ENP East and Russian Federation is a complex initiative. It is to be mentioned that SEIS as a framework has not been entirely finalised with the EEA member countries, but is part of the long-term cooperation with the EEA. The work in this direction is continuing, embracing now also the ENPI partner countries. While there are some parallels to be drawn between the cooperation with EEA member and cooperating countries and the ENPI partner countries, the collaboration with the ENPI regions has its own specificities and touches upon some risks and assumptions that have been included in section 3 of the project's Terms of Reference.

Several issues that arise in the cooperation with the ENPI countries to date should be taken into consideration with respect to the impact on the successful project implementation further:

- Further successful implementation/development of SEIS concept across EU/EEA members
- Conclusion of cooperation agreements with relevant international institutions for joint activities, collecting and sharing of environmental data, such as UNEP/MAP, UNECE, CEDARE, CIS-STAT, etc.
- Willingness and support from the partner country governments to cooperate and contribute to SEIS development through regional and national activities, including appointment of appropriate experts as project NFPs
- Establishing cooperation between the environmental and statistical networks on national level (which sometimes do not cooperate very closely), as well as benefiting from previous capacity building activities in ENPI regions involving statistical networks (such as MEDSTAT) and getting support and assistance from Eurostat

- Complex, sensitive and unstable political situation in the ENPI regions (especially, in the South: EU sanctions imposed on Syria and delicate balance in the regional cooperation involving Israel as one of the partner countries)
- Ensuring consistency with and complementarity to other relevant initiatives/projects in the ENPI regions, particularly those linked to various reporting obligations
- Continuity in number of staff on the EEA Project Coordination Team.

All these issues are regularly reviewed and discussed with DG DEVCO and the Management Group as necessary for the smooth implementation and successful outcome of the project.

1.2. Staffing of the project team at EEA

The initial recruitment of staff for the project was completed in 2010-early 2011. Currently, the project coordination team at EEA covers three Contract Agents (CAs) recruited under and covered by the ENPI-SEIS project budget, two Temporary Agents (TAs) covered by the EEA core budget and an interimaire secretary.

Among the changes of recent months to report are:

- The contract of the recruited project manager on ENP Statistics was not confirmed after 9-month probationary period (1 September 2010-31 May 2011)
- The National Expert post on the team (occupied until January 2011) is retained and is to be filled by another National Expert in the coming months
- As foreseen in the Terms of Reference, an interimaire secretary was recruited as of 1 July 2011 to support the project team activities.

The situation with regard to the team staffing was raised with the Management Group during the teleconference on 26 May 2011 and subsequently discussed bilaterally between EEA and DG DEVCO as part of the contract management of the project. The option for recruitment of the fourth CA or an additional National Expert under the project was raised by the EEA Project Manager with the Contracting Authority in July and needs to be further considered.

List of the EEA Project Coordination team with contacts is provided under title IV below.

1.3. Sub-contracting within the project in 2011

Following an open tender process for awarding a Framework contract for support on implementation of the Shared Environmental Information System ([EEA/SES/10/001](#)) that has taken place in early 2010, contracts were awarded in June 2010 to two international consortia led by:

- ZOI Environment network (Switzerland) – for SEIS support in ENP East and Russia,
- Umweltbundesamt (UBA-Austria) – for SEIS support in ENP South, Western Balkans and Turkey.

In addition, in 2010, EEA concluded an agreement with UN Headquarter for applying FAFA provisions *mutatis mutandis* to the arrangement between the EEA and the UN bodies, which was used for the grant agreements made with UNECE and UNEP/MAP for the work carried out during the inception phase in preparing the Regional SEIS State-of-Play reports. This was already reported to the Contracting Authority in the Inception Report of January 2010.

Within the provisions of the above-mentioned contractual arrangements, in planning further project activities the EEA concluded the following specific contracts in early 2011:

- Specific contract No. 3540/R0/B2011/EEA.54437 with ZOI for organizing and facilitating the ENPI-SEIS country visits in the six ENP East countries and the Russian Federation
- Specific contract No. 3540/R0/B2010/EEA.54443 with UBA for organizing and facilitating the ENPI-SEIS country visits in the nine ENP South countries

- Specific contract No. 3540/R0/B2010/EEA.54468 with UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) for supporting the ENP East countries and Russian Federation to participate in the work of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators in 2011
- Specific contract No. 3540/R0/B2011/EEA.54494 with ZOI for preparation of 'SEIS cookbook' (first draft due by end 2011).

The description of the specific activities undertaken within the above sub-contracts is presented in the activities under the specific areas in section 2 and 3 of the report.

1.4. Budget expenditure

As of 15 September 2011, 29% of the total project budget (i.e. of 5,746,500 EUR) has been committed, covering sub-contracting, salaries to staff and travel costs associated with missions to the countries. The payments made by 15 September 2011 come to 19.4% of the total budget, and there is an overall balance between the expenses made for the two regions. Given the focus on the establishment of closer links with the partner countries mainly through country visits in the reported period, the greater part of the budget expenditure is concentrated on activities under Area 3 (SEIS infrastructure and development) and Area 6 (Management and coordination).

The plans for the coming period are to focus efforts on activities linked to Areas 1 and 2 (i.e. indicators and data flows).

Detailed overview of the budget expenditure is presented in section 4.

1.5. Activities for the next period

The plans for the next period of work have been captured in the activities table that was already submitted to the Contracting Authority with the Inception report in January 2011. The table in Annex 1 (covering January 2011-July 2014) has been revised in line with discussions during country visits conducted and identification of activities in the further project implementation. Timing of training and capacity building activities is tentative and it would be further reframed following discussions at the Steering Committee meeting in November 2011.

2. IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES FOR ENP SOUTH

The activities implemented in the ENP South region are reported under the six activity areas as outlined in the agreed Terms of Reference (ToR).

2.1. Activities under Area 1: Suitable environmental indicators and scorecards

Activities under this area are aimed at identifying and drawing up a list of potential common indicators, based on available data and information in the ENP South countries, linked to relevant policy questions and existing initiatives also connected to measuring progress made under the Horizon 2020 initiative, which has identical priority themes for the cooperation as the ones identified jointly with the ENP South countries during the Steering Committee meeting held in November 2010: municipal waste, water including urban waste water, industrial emissions.

These priority areas were addressed during the 2nd meeting of the Horizon 2020 Review, Monitoring and Research (RMR) sub-group which was held on 30-31 March 2011 in EEA premises and was attended by more than 40 representatives of national administrations, EC services, UNEP/MAP, international organisations, and other regional projects, including research.

This meeting was aimed at looking into the most recent developments of the H2020 initiative, links to progress and further activities within the ENPI-SEIS project and other regional initiatives, in particular synergies with relevant research activities in the Mediterranean region. Linking to the priority areas agreed with the countries at the Steering Committee meeting held on 10-11 November 2010, the RMR sub-group discussed extensively how to develop a regular reporting process to monitor environmental progress in "depolluting the Mediterranean" with a particular focus on the three H2020 priority issues (urban waste water, municipal waste and industrial emissions).

The development of scorecard(s) foreseen within the project was not seen as an appropriate and reachable outcome for the region, at least within the period of the project; therefore the discussions at RMR were aimed at gradually developing a mechanism to assess progress. The outcome of the meeting was the agreement to pursue the development of pilots with the countries testing and demonstrating what can be achieved to measure progress on the three H2020 priority areas and the process needed for that, taking into consideration the on-going activities of UNEP/MAP and its proposed indicator list. As chair of the RMR sub-group, EEA prepared draft outlines for the pilots on the basis of the discussions at the meeting and the UNEP/MAP indicator proposal, which were shared with the RMR sub-group participants for comments and inputs. Minor feedback was provided during the month of consultation (June 2011), and the comments received were incorporated in the final version of the outline for the pilots. The documentation from the RMR sub-group meeting, including agenda, minutes, final outline for the pilots and list of participants is available on the project website under the following link: <http://coordination.h2020.net/rmr/meetings/2011-03-30-31-copenhagen-2nd-rmr-sub-group-meeting>

Following the proposal to develop the pilots at different levels (country, sub-regional and regional), the country visits allowed to identify and confirm country interest to work on a selected area(s) in the coming months, thus contributing to the identification of a selection of measurable indicators for the three priority areas. The proposal for developing pilots was taken up by several countries (Algeria, Jordan, Israel and Morocco from the countries visited until now). With respect to that the EEA is working towards bringing together a core group with representatives from these countries, including statistical offices in the ENP South countries, in the next phase in order to

develop a methodology for common environmental indicators and set up a regular indicator process under H2020. This work would be done jointly with UNEP/MAP and other relevant stakeholders (e.g. UNSD, Eurostat, EMWIS, CEDARE, League of Arab States). Based on this, EEA is expecting to draft a first review of progress - contributing also to measuring progress under H2020 Initiative- to be discussed and further elaborated during the next RMR meeting.

In the first stage of the project implementation, it was considered useful to prepare an overview of types of data available and indicator frames in the countries covered by the project. Therefore, an indicator comparability table was prepared for existing indicators and basic information on their use by the EEA, UNECE-EECCA, UNSD/UNEP, EUROSTAT/MEDSTAT, FAO, UNEP/MAP, UNFCCC, WHO. The table (prepared as an internal background document) covers indicator definitions, legal status, data availability, methodology, key and specific policy questions addressed, and data source information. As a next step in the ENPI-SEIS project implementation and building on the indicator comparability table prepared, the team focused on identifying the available national indicator sets within ENP South (relevant also for ENP East countries and Russian Federation) via country visits, compiled country reports, regional overviews and state-of-play reports.

Close cooperation with UNEP/MAP is essential for each of the activities of ENP South component of the project. EEA has been in frequent contact with UNEP/MAP officials, invited them to join the country visits in the region and to engage their network in identifying mutually beneficial activities.

The work on identification and selection of common regional indicators will be pursued in the next phase of the project implementation through regional workshops for the production and use of indicators at national and regional level, organised jointly with stakeholders mentioned above and in order to build the capacities within the countries for taking this work forward. The success of this activity closely links to the willingness of the environmental and statistical networks in the region to cooperate and agree on developing a common set of indicators, to provide access to the available data and information as basis for streamlining indicators within the project framework and linked to the H2020 priorities, as well as to commit resources at national level to support this process.

2.2. Activities under Area 2: Timely, relevant, reliable and coherent environmental data

Linked to the activities described under area 2.1 and the outcome of the H2020 RMR sub-group meeting, during the country visits conducted the EEA has engaged in dialogue with the countries on the availability and regular update of data, data sets and information flows within the related national and international reporting obligations. In this task the EEA has tried to involve relevant regional and international organisations, including UNEP/MAP, in order to consolidate efforts and capacities for processing, storing, validating and exchanging national environmental data. Establishing reliable and comparable data flows across the region has to feed into the common set of indicators that will be made available and accessible through a SEIS-compliant national/regional system. As foreseen in the timetable for the project implementation, national data/data flows need to support the production of the first biennial synthesis progress report as outlined in Activity area 2.4 (see on page 20), to be scheduled now for first-half of 2012.

During the discussions in the country visits in the ENP South region, the EEA team is taking note of the priorities the national partners are indicating in terms of requirements for technical assistance in the areas of data management, production, integration and exchange to be followed up in the further activities. Building on the common regional interest, the EEA is planning to organise together with relevant regional and international partners (e.g. UNEP/MAP RACs, CEDARE, EMWIS, UNSD etc.) joint capacity building activities/regional workshops for both environmental and

statistical networks to share experience and build capacities in the handling of environmental data (production, management, processing, QA/QC, exchange, data integration etc.) in compliance with SEIS principles and good practice, based on the available data and information due under various reporting obligations of the countries in the region, particularly focusing on the identified three priority areas.

To that end and in coordination with Eurostat, the organisation of a joint regional workshop EEA/Eurostat is foreseen in 2012⁴ gathering statisticians and environmental experts. There has been some preliminary discussions with Eurostat but there is still no formal agreement in place in this respect as the tender procedure is still underway in Eurostat. In order to take advantage of the expertise in Eurostat as Data Centre for waste, it is expected to focus this regional workshop on that issue. A similar EEA/Eurostat regional workshop on water is foreseen for the Eastern countries. Dates and detailed content of these workshops will need further discussion with Eurostat.

Discussions are also on-going with UNSD and UN-ESCWA for the organisation of joint workshops to support the development and implementation of water accounts in the region, in view to support a concrete trial toward SEIS implementation. In perspective this will support strengthening the cooperation between the statistical and environmental networks in the field of data exchange and reporting, as well as identify the gaps in relation to the data flows needed for producing the common set of indicators, outlined in area 2.1.

2.3. Activities under Area 3: SEIS-compliant national and regional environmental information system

The activities of gradually developing elements to support the extension of the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) to the Mediterranean region in line with the approach followed with EEA member and cooperating countries were in focus during the reporting period and were mainly pursued during the visits to the countries in the ENP South region. The country visits started in April 2011 and covered the following partner countries: Algeria (6-7 April), Jordan (27-28 April), Egypt (3-4 May), Palestinian Authority (11-12 May), Israel (5-6 July 2011), with two more visits scheduled to: Lebanon (on 25-26 October 2011) and Tunisia (on 1-2 November 2011). During the inception phase a pilot visit was conducted to Morocco on 20-21 September 2010, and subsequently two technical visits were carried out to contribute to a TAIEX seminar on environment accounting in May 2011 and on the occasion of the kick-off of a US State Department project implemented by UNEP-ROWA to support the National Environment Observatory in the development of their national information system and the implementation of an integrated environment assessment process (12-14 September 2011).

a. Country visits, outcome, priorities and next steps

The country visits in the ENP South were designed around two days of discussions in workshop style. The aim was to bring together the national and regional environmental and statistical networks in order to:

- facilitate dialogue and improve understanding (of roles and responsibilities) and cooperation,
- improve/strengthen capacities,
- assess the current state-of-play of existing and planned national environmental information,
- present/promote the basic principles of SEIS and the benefits of establishing a shared system, and
- identify regional and country specific issues and relevant data flows.

⁴ Linked to a call for tender to be launched by Eurostat

The discussions during the visits are aimed at focusing on available information and data flows, methods for data production and exchange as well as data management, analysis and integration, and communication, underpinned by general SEIS principles⁵. Based on the discussions held during the visits, a special emphasis was given to the identification of concrete and feasible actions to be undertaken in a short-term perspective. The detailed implementation plan of the proposed actions, together with capacity building needs, are being further elaborated as part of the Country Reports.

The main outcome from the country visits are the Country Reports to be produced by the country (project NFPs), supported by the contractor (UBA-Austria for the ENP South region). These Country Reports are a key element for the development of the SEIS in the Neighbourhood countries, since these reports are designed to engage the countries in further work by reflecting on the current state-of-play and expectations, as well as by identifying future development needs with respect to the three SEIS components – content, infrastructure and inter-institutional cooperation. Agendas, list of participants and project presentations are available in the respective country folders on the project website. The country presentations are being made available there with the explicit agreement of the countries; although Israel asked not to make the information provided during the country visit publicly available.

Following the first country visits, it appeared that the process towards production of the Country Reports was not fully grasped by the national representatives and they needed more guidance and support. An explanatory note and a template for the Country Report was developed in June (see Template ENPI-SEIS Country Report in Annex 4) and circulated among relevant EEA staff and Framework Contractors (FWC) involved in the country visits to set up a baseline for preparation of the Country Reports. It has been agreed that depending on the level of involvement of the country the output may be either a Country Report formally endorsed by the country or in case it is not produced and endorsed by the country, the output will be called a Country Profile prepared on behalf of the country by EEA/FWC.

The documents produced so far describe mainly the presentations given and discussions held during the visits, together with conclusions and actions agreed. These documents are still to be completed and endorsed by the countries thus cannot be considered at this stage as Country Reports.

Currently the draft meeting reports are being further elaborated jointly by EEA and the NFPs, based on the recommendations and template provided. This proved to take more time than initially envisaged (2 months after the country visits) due to the consultations needed between the contractor and the country on one hand, and among the various actors at national level on the other. The Country Reports from the visits conducted so far are expected to be finalised shortly.

The following table summarises the nature and status of the documents produced by mid-September.

Table 1. Status of the documents produced following the country visits conducted to ENP South – as of mid-September 2011

Country	Date of the visit	Documents produced, status	Comments
Morocco	20-21/09/2010	The country visit report was attached to the Regional State of Play	The Country Report template has been provided to the NFPs in June 2011, a first draft is under preparation.

⁵Commission Communication COM(2008) 46 final '[Towards a Shared Environmental Information System \(SEIS\)](#)', February 2008

		report produced by UNEP/MAP in late 2010	
Algeria	6-7/04/ 2011	Meeting report (FR draft) and mission report available	EEA comments provided. Country Report under preparation by the country/FWC based on EEA template. Several exchanges between NFPs and FWC, the working version is currently reviewed/complemented by the country. Final document expected by end of September. Endorsement might need some more time due to need for Minister's signature
Jordan	27-28/04/ 2011	Meeting report (EN draft) and mission report available	EEA comments provided. Country Report under preparation by the country/FWC based on EEA template. Several exchanges between NFPs and FWC, the working version is currently reviewed / complemented by the country. No environmental NFP causes some difficulties in national coordination. If the current version is endorsed by the country, the Country Report is expected by end of September, otherwise a Country Profile will be produced.
Egypt	3-4/05/ 2011	Meeting report (EN draft) and mission report available	EEA comments provided. Based on EEA template a draft version of Country Report under preparation. NFPs not engaged, gaps in the document will be filled in by FWC. Country profile expected by end of September. Later this can be a basis for developing into Country Report with the NFPs.
Palestinian Authority	11-12/05/ 2011	Meeting report (EN draft)and mission report available	EEA comments provided. Based on EEA template a draft version of Country Report is currently under preparation by the country/FWC. Final document expected by mid- October. Endorsement might need some more time.

Israel	5-6/07/ 2011	Meeting report (EN draft) available	Country Report under preparation by the country/FWC based on EEA template. Final document expected by mid- October. Endorsement might need some more time.
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For all the visits, UNEP/MAP Coordination Unit has been regularly kept informed and invited to take an active part both in the preparation and participation in the country visits. Despite some evidence of interest for the visits to Israel, Tunisia and Lebanon, UNEP/MAP involvement has been rather limited and no UNEP/MAP representative joined the visits. Nevertheless, in all the countries, the MED POL national focal point attended the meeting and gave a presentation of the MED POL activities within the countries. As a practice, UNEP/MAP focal points have been informed of the country visits and they have also attended the meetings in some of the countries.

While the country reports for the visits held so far are in different stages of preparation and not yet all officially endorsed by the countries, the ENPI Team tried to capture the main priorities raised by the countries during the country visits, and draw up an outline of the regional baseline that could be extracted from the discussions with the countries and the other international and regional initiatives of relevance for the ENP South region.

These themes would be further addressed through regional workshops/events, expert exchanges, twinning projects, capacity building activities and the use of EEA/Eionet tools and websites, including Eye on Earth, involving more than one country and technical support from EEA colleagues, Eionet National Focal Points and European Topic Centres as needed.

Table 2. Overview of the ENP South country visits outputs

Country	National priorities and potential thematic issues for capacity building	Actions agreed within ENPI-SEIS project
Morocco	Integration of existing information systems (including geo spatial data) Sustainability of monitoring networks Indicator based assessment PRTR Environment accounting	To give support to National Environmental Information System and links with regional Environment observatories; Enhancing coordination between institutions; Implementation of services based on a distributed architecture; Data policy, facilitate access and usage conditions of environmental data; Implementation of H2020 pilot.
Algeria	Cooperation and data policy concerns Monitoring discharges at sea Waste monitoring, waste statistics Data harmonisation, QA/QC	To give support to the National Environmental Information System under development by facilitating co-operation and promoting of open data policies (SEIS pilot); To help Algeria in fulfilling their reporting obligation regarding monitoring discharges at sea, opening a potential path toward a country assessment on this issue
Egypt	Carry-out State-of-Play of the situation Development of national environmental database	No actions agreed yet, to be develop further by the NFPs

	Setup efficient coordination mechanism Access and confidentiality of information	
Israel	Strengthen the data collection – indicator – policy development cycle Indicator based assessments Build an integrated environment information system Water accounting Data harmonisation, QA/QC	Indicator development, candidate to conduct a pilot on marine pollution (RMR) Facilitate regional water accounts; identify working methods, and possibilities for regular production of accounts PRTR :assist in connecting databases – building information infrastructure, links with regional MED POL PRTR guidance
Jordan	E-government developments / develop shared information system Further develop priority data flows and environmental indicators Waste monitoring/waste statistics Water accounts Data harmonisation, QA/QC	Assist in system design Exchange knowledge and experiences on implementing a Spatial Data Infrastructure Capacity building in monitoring, collection, storage, assessment, and reporting of environmental data Strengthened production of water accounts
Palestinian Authority	Develop an implementation plan for National Environmental Information System with relevant data flows Process towards integrated assessment Waste monitoring/waste statistics Emissions factors Water accounts Data harmonisation, QA/QC	Support the development of an implementation plan for NEIS Streamlining/reviewing indicators (pilot) Needs and gaps analysis regarding data flows Discuss priority thematic areas

b. Mid-term analysis of the country visit outputs

It was observed during the visits to the region that even if in general the concepts and principles of SEIS are mostly welcomed and shared by the different stakeholders and institutions present during the meeting, their effective development and ownership against the national situation is more delicate and complex. The visits confirmed the high sensitivity of the issue of data confidentiality, data policy and sharing of responsibility when it comes to public access of the information.

Due to the higher emphasis given to the environmental issues in recent times and due to various on-going regional or bilateral cooperation activities, the countries in the region (similar for both East and South region) have several established elements of information systems (e.g. separate databases with no regular data flows) organised by thematic issues (air, water, waste, etc.). However there are only few connections between them and no integration. More efforts will also have to be put into the development of strategies and plans for Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) in the South.

The general international and national processes push the countries to provide better access to their information and to integrate environment into other policies. Some initial efforts have been made to respond to these demands but the development of effective inter-institutional cooperation and appropriate governance structures still appear to be the main challenge towards implementing SEIS. While the countries seek assistance on how to proceed further and which steps to take in order to reach better inter-institutional cooperation, better governance and efficient management of environmental information, it has to be mentioned that the necessary administrative and legal procedures that has to be put in place for reaching agreement on a common data policy for information exchange on the way to implement SEIS might hinder the progress expected within the duration of the project.

During the country visits conducted in the ENP South region, the countries emphasised the importance of having a regional perspective in the process of building SEIS, using the existing building blocks (in particular what is being implemented in the framework of the Barcelona Convention and the UNEP/MAP activities). There appears to be an opportunity for the ENPI-SEIS project to serve both processes. The recent nomination of a New Secretary General of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, Youssef Amrani, may provide a new incentive for strengthening cooperation within the region and promote the benefits of sharing information to support better policy and governance. A particular focus is given to identify and develop contacts with existing and planned projects and initiatives having a strong information component in order to ensure an appropriate diffusion of the SEIS principles and complementarity of activities (e.g. US State Department project in Morocco, FP7 projects PEGASO, PERSEUS, Medina, EMWIS, etc.) (further elaborated under section 2.5 e).

During all country visits to the ENP South region, contact with the EU Delegations was established with briefings/de-briefings provided on the objectives of the project and expected results (see in table in Annex 3).

It appears that the key support to be provided within the regional context, in the form of trainings, sharing of experience and best practices is:

- The development of integrated information infrastructure,
- Indicator-development and support to integrated assessment,

To be complemented by more thematic focus on:

- Water monitoring, indicators, assessments (Israel, Jordan, Palestinian Authority)
- Water accounts (Jordan, Morocco, Israel, Palestinian Authority)
- Waste inventories (Jordan, Algeria, Palestinian Authority)
- Emission inventories (Palestinian Authority)
- Data harmonisation, QA/QC (all countries).

Trainings around the above topics are planned to be organised in the coming period (starting early 2012) on regional or sub-regional level, involving other international organisations/ partners active in the region.

2.4. Activities under Area 4: Assessment of the progress of regional environmental initiatives

There is not much to report under this activity area in the reporting period, since the assessment activity will build on the work done in the above three areas and is envisaged to start at a later stage of the project implementation.

The major activity to report, linking to the planned biennial assessment of the region, is that in preparation for the country visits to the ENP South countries the EEA team has been compiling an

overview of available data, reports and assessments published in national and regional state of environment, statistical and other reports as background information for further project activities.

The production of a biennial synthesis progress report is seen as part of a long-term process towards the development of a reporting mechanism for measuring progress under the Horizon 2020 initiative. The preparation of this report is conditional upon the countries' commitment to make relevant monitoring data flow available and to production of a common set of indicators.

Due to the delay in closing the partnership agreement with UNEP/MAP (further elaborated under section 2.6), it is expected that the first trial reporting contribution under H2020 could be available in 2012, possibly as part of the joint EEA - UNEP/MAP reporting activities. This would then be a major step towards the outcome expected to be produced in 2014 – the 5-year report, based on steps taken by the countries towards gradual development and establishment of a SEIS compliant system in the region.

The assessment work will be closely linked to activities of other relevant partners in the region and to the pilots agreed to be developed by a few countries at the RMR meeting in March 2011. Further planned activities linked to this area are targeted training sessions for experts both from environment and statistics in the field of environment reporting and indicators, which should enhance also capacity building and sharing of information between the two networks.

2.5. Activities under Area 5: Communication and dissemination

Regular communication and dissemination of the deliverables is an important element of the project implementation. For the reporting period, the following developments occurred:

a. Development and maintenance of the project website

One of the main project activities and deliverable was the ENPI-SEIS project web portal (<http://enpi-seis.ew.eea.europa.eu/>) hosted on the Envirowindows platform of the EEA server. The portal contains information about the project partners, project activities, related projects, calendar of upcoming events, as well as information materials produced so far (including agendas, lists of participants and presentations from the country visits). The portal is aimed to provide to the user a general overview of the project objectives, partners, activities held, documents from the ENP country visits and communication products, as well as information on governance, upcoming activities and events. The deliverables within the project are being made accessible online. Following the website set-up and maintenance during this initial implementation period, a survey on the effectiveness of the information provided on the project website is planned to be launched in the coming period. From 1 May until mid-September 2011 there were around 1200 visits to the project portal (~ 700 unique visitors) that spent on average 5 minutes on the site.

Links to the websites of other regional initiatives/projects, including Horizon 2020 portal, have been setup and regularly maintained. A sitemap of the project portal can be viewed [online](#).

Among the foreseen tools for further development are the online discussion forum providing platform for dedicated discussions on specific topics and commenting available documents and reports.

b. Project Newsletter

The first project newsletter was launched in June 2011 to communicate to various partners and stakeholders information about the progress on the project. The first issue of the newsletter is available in English, French, Russian and Arabic and has been disseminated to the main stakeholders and partners in the countries and international organisations. It is envisaged to produce the newsletter twice yearly in four languages for the whole duration of the project. The next issue of the newsletter will be issued in December 2011.

c. Input to H2020News Flashes

Contributions to the May and September issues of the Horizon 2020 News Flashes were made, reflecting the activities in the first half of 2011. The H2020 News Flashes were translated into French and Arabic (<http://www.h2020.net/en/news-and-events/h2020-news-flashes.html>).

d. Trilateral discussions between the chairs of the H2020 sub-groups

In order to keep an overview of the activities within the Horizon2020 Initiative, a regular stock-taking of actions by the three working sub-groups (Investments for Pollution Reduction-PR; Capacity Building-CB and Review, Monitoring and Research-RMR) has been foreseen. Representatives of the PR and CB sub-groups attended the RMR meeting in Copenhagen and on that occasion discussed further joint activities.

Following the discussions at the RMR meeting with experts from the PR sub-group, the EEA hosted an interactive platform with the priority investment projects in the Mediterranean region developed by MeHSIP-PPIF (Mediterranean Hot Spots Investment Programme – Project Preparation and Implementation Facility), in need of financial support by EIB and other funding sources for further development and funding. Basic information of 29 projects– covering one (or more) of Horizon 2020 priority areas – has been published on the EEA website under <http://www.eea.europa.eu/h2020/mehsip-ppif> , visible also through the Eye on Earth map service under this link: <http://www.eea.europa.eu/h2020>.

It was envisaged to hold the next trilateral discussion between the sub-group chairs in early September in Athens on the occasion of the UNEP/MAP Focal Point meeting. However, due to the rescheduling of the UNEP/MAP FP meeting, the trilateral discussion had also been postponed to later in the year.

A teleconference call has been agreed to take place with the Capacity Building (CB/MEP) and Pollution Reduction (MEHSIP-PPIF) sub-group leaders on 7 November for updating each other on progress, as well as coordinating next steps and joint activities.

e. Synergies with regional & national EU-funded projects and other initiatives in the South

Regular communication and exchange to identify possible synergies and joint activities is maintained with various regional projects, including research. Below is a non-exhaustive list of the initiatives and projects that the EEA team is cooperating with and regularly exchanging information on further activities:

- Support for Morocco’s Regional and National Observatories project supported by US Department of State Federal Assistance Award (started in September 2011) implemented by UNEP with EEA as technical partner. A special emphasis is given to embed the overall process toward the production of integrated environment assessment with SEIS principles. The project was officially launched on September 14 in Rabat with all the stakeholders and representatives of Department of State, UNEP and EEA
- Boosting Best Available Techniques in the Mediterranean Partner Countries (BAT4MED) FP7 project (started in January 2011)
- MIRA (Mediterranean Innovation and Research Coordination Action), supported by FP7
- PERSEUS project (Policy-oriented marine Environmental Research in the Southern EUropean Seas) under FP7 as a follow-up of SESAME (Southern European Seas: Assessing and Modelling Ecosystem Changes), supported within FP6 under the priority Sustainable Development, Global Change and Ecosystems
- TAIEX (Technical Assistance Information Exchange Instrument) support on environmental accounts to the State Secretariat for Water and Environment of Morocco

- Implementation of Technical Tools for Water Management project (Mise en place des Outils Techniques de Gestion de l'Eau) - ITTWM (MOTGE), implemented by the Ministry of Energy and Water of Lebanon
- EU-funded projects within the Cross Border Cooperation of the Mediterranean programme
- Contribution to the preparation of the next World Water Forum to be held in Marseille in March 2012, via the working group on Target 7 related to the setting up of Water Information Systems of Transboundary nature.

f. Other Project communication products

- Dedicated e-mail box for communication with the countries was set-up in early 2011
- ENPI-SEIS Leaflet was produced and translated into French for wide dissemination during events and country visits.
- Dissemination of the ENPI-SEIS project objectives and activities through publications in newsletters/publications of international organisations (UNSD Newsletter, in collaboration with UNSD- Environment Statistics Branch, EEA provided an overview of the ENPI-SEIS project activities to be included in June issue of the Envstat News and notes; Inputs also in the Newsletter of the EU delegation to Algeria).
- Input/update of various EEA communication materials was made, including update of the main EEA website, production of a separate EEA briefing on ENP/ENPI-SEIS, update information on EEA intranet.

g. List of project meetings, dates and venues

Events and missions for the reporting period have been identified in consultation with the Contracting Authority to ensure better visibility and links to relevant partners. The EEA team is keeping in contact with other on-going initiatives and projects in the South region, related to the ENPI-SEIS project objectives, and participating in relevant events to foster closer cooperation.

An overview of the missions and meetings attended in the reporting period (both for South and East), as well as an indicative overview of upcoming ones, is provided in section 6 below.

2.6. Activities under Area 6: Management and coordination

In addition to the progress described in the sections above, the following issues should be taken note of under this activity area. Some management and coordination issues are relevant for activities both with ENP East and Russian Federation, on one hand, and ENP South, on the other.

a. Management Group

During the reported period one Management Group teleconference took place. Initially envisaged as a face-to-face meeting of the project Management Group, it was decided to hold a teleconference instead to make it more time and cost-efficient for all members. The teleconference took place in the morning of 26 May (10:00-12:30) and was attended by representatives of DG DEVCO, DG RTD, Eurostat, JRC and EEA. Minutes are publicly available on the project website under <http://enpi-seis.ew.eea.europa.eu/project-governance/management-group/mg>

b. Steering Committee meeting in 2011

Following the first Steering Committee meeting with the partner countries held on 10-11 November 2010 in Brussels, the EEA is planning to hold the annual Steering Committee with the country representatives on 24-25 November 2011 in EEA premises in Copenhagen. As foreseen in the ToR, the Steering Committee will bring together the Management Group members and representatives of the partner ENP countries and Russian Federation. It is planned that the two-

day event includes plenary sessions and dedicated regional workshops for ENP East and Russian Federation and for ENP South region respectively. Additionally, it has also been proposed to hold the next Management Group discussion back-to-back with the Steering Committee meeting in Copenhagen.

c. Discussions with UNEP/MAP on cooperation within the ENPI-SEIS project

The EEA and UNEP/MAP (Mediterranean Action Programme) have a long-standing collaboration within the Mediterranean region. The past years have been focused on the cooperation in support of Horizon 2020 Initiative. With the start of the ENPI-SEIS project, it was foreseen to broaden the cooperation to promoting the expansion of SEIS development in the Mediterranean region, while jointly working on a common set of indicators for the ENP South, inventories of available data and information in the countries, building up on the established networks and work that UNEP/MAP and its RACs have been supporting in the region.

UNEP/MAP was contracted in mid-2010 to prepare a State-of-Play report for the ENP South region as a first step for building the development and implementation of the ENPI-SEIS process in the Mediterranean countries. This report was presented and discussed with the countries at the first Steering Committee meeting held in November 2010. However, following the good collaboration on the report production in 2010, discussions between EEA and the Coordinating Unit of UNEP/MAP in the first half of 2011 have not resulted in an agreed partnership/work plan of further joint activities. Neither were UNEP/MAP representatives able to join any of the country visits in the ENP South region held so far. The lack of formal agreement and cooperation results in unplanned and often accidental information about regional activities organised by UNEP/MAP and its RAC being received by the EEA Project Coordination Team from various sources and colleagues.

In an attempt to ameliorate the situation and develop a joint work plan, the EEA team visited UNEP/MAP premises in Athens on 4 July 2011 to discuss the way forward, as well as the timetable for development of a joint EEA-UNEP/MAP work programme foreseen to cover the next two-year period (2012-2013⁶). This is planned to be the second EEA-UNEP/MAP joint work plan (the first joint work plan for the period 2006-2008 is available under http://195.97.36.231/acrobatfiles/MAPDocAcrobatfiles/eeaMAP20062008_eng.pdf) and it is aimed to cover various areas: data and indicators, environmental reporting, new and emerging issues (e.g. green economy, ecosystem-based management) as well as networking, partnerships and capacity building activities. These areas are all embedded in the development and implementation of the SEIS extension to the Mediterranean region. While the discussions of July stressed on the need to seal agreement at Directors' level as soon as possible, to date the work on the discussed issues is continuing rather slowly.

It is to be noted that within the last months UNEP/MAP had some staff changes (shift of Tatiana Hema from MEDU to MED POL and no new officer in charge appointed yet, late arrival of the new appointed MEDU Deputy coordinator, leave of Plan Bleu Director with no replacement yet). To support the discussion process, MEDU has temporarily (until end of September) designated a member of staff under the Coordination Unit (Ms Virgine Hart mainly involved in the Mediterranean Strategic Partnership) to lead the discussion with EEA. Following the end of Ms Hart's duty within MEDU, the new UNEP/MAP deputy coordinator is Mr Habib N. El-Habr, who will be personally following the discussion with EEA. Over the last weeks, MEDU was fully occupied with their internal discussions and the preparation of the MAP Bureau meeting and MAP focal point meeting. Jacqueline McGlade and Maria Luisa Silva are expected to meet and finalise the Joint Work Plan contractual agreement for the services requested to UNEP/MAP up to 2014.

⁶Linked to the period of the current EEA Strategy 2009-2013

This meeting is still pending and we hope progress on the JWP will proceed more rapidly now with the support and technical involvement of Mr El-Habr.

Minutes of the EEA-UNEP/MAP meeting in Athens of 4 July with agreed actions for the coming months are available in Annex 5.

d. Review, Monitoring and Research (RMR) sub-group meetings planning

According to the Terms of Reference, the H2020RMR sub-group shall meet in principle once a year. This was also the agreement with the RMR participants at the second meeting in March 2011. Provided that the costs for the organisation of meetings of the RMR sub-group will be covered by the Capacity Building component of the ENPI Mediterranean Environment Programme (MEP), EEA will seek approval from the Contracting Authority to call for the third RMR meeting in the first quarter of 2012. The next RMR meeting would then take stock of the progress made following the outcome agreed and the development of pilots as well as examine the existing data flows in order to feed into the indicator development process and make proposals for improvement on the quality of the data delivered from the national level (see section 2.1).

In addition, discussions with DG Research have been on-going on providing support to the H2020 Initiative with a series of activities dealing with research and scientific knowledge created around the issues of sea pollution and de-pollution in the Mediterranean, their impacts, real-time monitoring, pollution remediation and its prevention. Therefore, MIRA WP7 (Mediterranean Innovation and Research Coordination Action) Leader has proposed a working plan to mobilize the European and Mediterranean research community around the issues prioritized regarding the scientific agenda of Horizon2020. To that end, the proposal put forward is to set up a knowledge management structure⁷ to deal with identifying key issues related to the final target of de-polluting the Mediterranean Sea based on the state of knowledge and competences of the different Mediterranean Countries and creation of a Working Group of specialists on marine water contamination. The main outputs of this activity, involving also EEA members and interacting with the Capacity Building component, will be the support to the governance of the Horizon2020 Initiative with scientific advice and the identification of knowledge deficits in the handling of the initiatives of Horizon 2020 that, will give rise to calls for tender or proposals of research projects aiming at tackling these deficits of knowledge.

At the RMR meeting, it was agreed to create a Core Group for Research under H2020, to be led by DG Research. The official request should be submitted to the H2020 SC meeting in early 2012. Several exchanges took place over the summer and this autumn with DG Research to identify and coordinate the nomination of the experts for the Core Group. When possible, the MIRA contact point has been informed of and invited to attend the country visits meeting.

In terms of Management and coordination it has to be underlined that throughout the activities undertaken within the ENPI-SEIS project so far regular dialogue has been maintained with the Project Manager(s) in the Contracting Authority – DG DEVCO (before and after the reorganisation of 1 June 2011) on the project execution and various contractual and management issues, as well as discussions with the other members of the Management Group on planning and implementation of various project activities.

⁷ Involving specialists affiliated to MIRA Project Partners and the Coordinators of the ERA-Wide Projects dealing with water management in the Mediterranean Countries

3. IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES FOR ENP EAST

Similar to the description of activities under section 2, the actions undertaken with respect to the ENPI East region are reported under the six activity areas as outlined in the project ToR.

3.1. Activities under Area 1: Suitable environmental indicators and scorecards

Development of a core set of indicators on a regional level is crucial for SEIS implementation. EEA has an extensive experience in this area proven by the adoption and implementation of EEA core set of indicators (CSI). Gradually the Western Balkan countries were integrated in this activity with funding under CARDS Programme. For East the work in this area started in 2003 under the TACIS programme and was carried out in partnership with the countries and UNECE. The work led to the production and endorsement of EECCA methodological guide for the production of indicators adopted in Belgrade in 2007 by the environmental ministers. The guide contains 36 indicators developed and agreed by EECCA countries following closely the EEA methodology. In the following years and in order to ensure practical support to the EECCA countries in the implementation of the EECCA core set at the national level UNECE jointly with the Conference of European Statisticians.

The UNECE Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators was established in 2009. The JTF was the first opportunity to bring together the environmental and statistical networks in the countries and encourage their dialogue and work together towards the production of the commonly agreed indicators. During its initial mandate from 2009 to 2010, JTF held three meetings and reviewed 20 environmental indicators out of 36 indicators from the UNECE Guidelines, covered in the Belgrade State of Environment report (based on the EECCA set of indicators). The process was fully steered and funded by UNECE and Conference of European Statisticians and UNSD. However, for continuity reasons EEA was following this process and participated in all these meetings in order to ensure that the regional approach is kept and the final outcome – common and comparable indicators is produced in line with the EEA CSI.

At its meeting on 4 March 2011 the Executive Committee of UNECE approved the extension of the mandate of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators for the period 2011–2012. According to its revised terms of reference, JTF should assist national statistical agencies and institutions responsible for the production of national state-of-the-environment reports in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe, with main objectives to further improve environmental statistics, strengthen environmental reporting and promote comparability of environmental statistics and indicators in the region (recorded in UNECE doc. ECE/CEP/161, annex II).

In planning the process of indicators development for the ENP East and Russian Federation within the ENPI-SEIS project, EEA built on the work already carried out together with the EECCA countries and UNECE. This was done in an effort to streamline the activities in this field, to increase synergies and avoid duplications, as well as to align to the revision of the EEACSI. The JTF involves environment and statistical representatives, the majority of which have now been nominated to also be ENPI-SEIS project national focal points (as of today - full overlap, i.e. both representatives for five countries and partial, i.e. one only representative for 2 countries). It should be noted that the Task Force is a well-established forum with very constructive and cooperative spirit both among the country representatives and between the environment and statistical NFPs for each country, which obviously results from joint work and fruitful contacts developed over the years.

Therefore as already indicated in section 1.3, taking into consideration FAFA provisions for EEA work agreements with UN bodies, in March 2011 the Agency concluded a contract with UNECE to provide support under the ENPI-SEIS project for enhanced cooperation with six ENP East Countries and Russian Federation on indicators, as well as for participation of their environment and statistics representatives in two meetings of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators in the course of 2011. The first meeting was held on 11-13 July in the International Conference Centre Geneva and was attended by three EEA project team members, led by Gordon McInnes.

During the July 2011 JTF meeting (numbered as its 3rd Session), the experts reviewed six indicators in the Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in EECCA countries, following a questionnaire that had been distributed to the countries in advance: (a) Biological oxygen demand (BOD) and concentration of ammonium in rivers; (b) Nutrients in freshwater; (c) Nutrients in coastal seawaters; (d) Area affected by soil erosion; (e) Pesticide consumption; and (f) Consumption of ozone-depleting substances. The group also took note of some proposed additional indicators for inland and seawater that were not covered by the Guidelines on total water use, water supply industry, wastewater treatment facilities, concentrations of pollutants in seawater and sediments. However, due to time constraints the discussion on these additional indicators was postponed till the October JTF meeting.

The last half-day of the JTF agenda was dedicated to the developments and plans for work under the ENPI-SEIS project (including indicators) and cooperation activities with the six ENP East countries and Russian Federation. This session was chaired by EEA Deputy Director, Gordon McInnes. During this part of the meeting, the NFPs from the Caucasus countries (Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan) where the ENPI-SEIS visits had already taken place gave feedback on the discussions and priorities for further activities, highlighting the need to have the outcome of the visit (the Country Report) endorsed by the official authorities. Therefore, it was agreed that the country representatives, together EEA through the framework contract support, could use slightly longer than the initially foreseen 2 months for its completion (i.e. 3-4 months).

The JTF agenda, list of participants, meeting documents, presentations made as well as the report from the meeting are available at the UNECE website under the following link:
<http://live.unece.org/stats/documents/2011.07.envIRON.html>.

In the margins of the Joint Task Force, EEA team met and had discussions with representatives from UNECE Secretariat, the Black Sea Commission, CIS-STAT, UNSD, UN Convention to Combat Desertification, UNEP Ozone Secretariat as well as the contractors from ZOI Environment Network on the possibilities for joint activities and further steps in the cooperation within ENPI-SEIS project.

The second JTF meeting for this year is scheduled to take place on 18-20 October in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, back-to-back with the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA) on 20-21 October 2011. For this meeting the EEA plans to draw some common elements/priorities coming through the ENPI-SEIS country visits and map them across the 36 indicators being reviewed in the JTF in order to concentrate on a number of joint regional indicators to be pursued in the next phase of the project. Further activities within the project, such as data flows underpinning the common indicators and capacity building (i.e. data management, monitoring, IT support, etc.) will also be discussed.

In terms of next steps, the EEA is envisaging to extend the support to the JTF to two more meetings in 2012 with a view to completing the review of the EECCA CSI and initiate then further development into a core set of indicators for the ENP East and Russian Federation, fully connected with the EEA core set (also under review and further developed). This would be undertaken alongside capacity building and expert training activities jointly with other stakeholders and relevant partners in the region.

3.2. Activities under Area 2: Timely, relevant, reliable and coherent environmental data

Similarly to the section on ENP South, the activities under this area are closely linked to the ones on indicators above. During the country visits, the EEA has engaged in dialogue with the country experts on the availability of national data collected and submitted within related national and international reporting obligations, as well as on the regularity of the update of relevant data sets and information flows. Further work in the field of data production and exchange, data management and integration would be planned through national and regional workshops, involving existing environmental and statistical networks, and would involve relevant regional and international organisations in order to consolidate efforts and capacities for processing, storing, validating and exchanging national environmental data. As far as possible this work will be linked to the activities of the UNECE Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators that is also bringing together the environment and the statistical networks, and which has a considerable overlap in representation with the appointed NFPs within the project in the East region.

During discussions in the country visits held so far, the EEA has taken note of the priorities put forward by the countries in terms of technical assistance in the areas of data management, production, validation, integration and exchange. Despite the time and resources allocated and the substantial amount of collected environmental data and information, the current practice is usually to store data in different databases, with no integration or interactive web-access. Further capacity building activities addressing experts from national environmental and statistical networks will be carried at a regional level.

Following the outcome of the Ministerial Conference in Astana (see more under 3.3 c), it is expected that there will be recommendations for development of a regular reporting process in the region underpinned by systematically collected indicators and data flows and the development of a shared knowledge base (SEIS) will help to reduce the gaps. This will provide further ministerial endorsement to the ENPI-SEIS project.

It is envisaged that in the next phase of the project, work will focus on sharing experiences and build capacities in handling of the environmental data (production, management, processing, QA/QC, exchange, data integration etc.) in compliance with SEIS principles and practice, based on the available data and information in the countries. Following the country visits, it becomes clear that there is lots of data and information available under various reporting obligations of the countries in the region, particularly focusing on the identified three priority areas⁸ that could be made better use of.

3.3. Activities under Area 3: SEIS-compliant national and regional environmental information system

As outlined in area 2.3 above and similarly to the ENP South region, the activities of gradually developing elements to support the extension of the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) to the six countries of ENP East (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) and Russian Federation is being designed in line with the approach followed with the EEA member and cooperating countries. The activities under this area during the reported period were concentrated around the visits to the countries in the region. As indicated above, the country visits started in April 2011 and covered the following partner countries in the East: Armenia (6-7 April), Georgia (9-10 June), Azerbaijan (13-14 June), Moldova (6-7 September) and Belarus (13-14 September 2011). More information on the country visits, priorities identified and next steps foreseen is provided further below.

⁸The priorities agreed for the ENP East and Russian Federation during the initial Consultation meeting in November 2010 cover: water particularly freshwater both in terms of quality and quantity (with Black Sea as first marine waters); municipal/household waste; as well as air emissions, climate change, eventually air quality.

a. Country visits, outcome, priorities and next steps

During the country visits completed in recent months to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia and Moldova, the EEA team met with high-level officials from the ministries of environment and statistical offices, the national focal points appointed for the project, as well as other governmental and non-governmental authorities active to go into more depth on the state and future needs in terms of cooperation, infrastructure and information in the three priority areas (water including freshwater and marine, municipal/household waste, and air emissions/ climate change). The format of the visits in the East is organised around two days, with one day dedicated to a national workshop involving a number of different stakeholders from environmental and statistical domain working with environmental data and information in the priority areas identified, followed by one day of bilateral meetings with the project NFPs and the main environmental and statistical institutes/organisations at national level. A UNECE representative participated in each of these visits to present the on-going related UNECE activities, national reporting obligations under UNECE conventions and protocols relevant to the ENPI-SEIS project and the state of national compliance. In addition, an invitation to the EEA NFP/Eionet group was regularly extended to join the country visits within the project (both East and South) in order to share experience in working with EEA and development of SEIS in their countries. NFP/Eionet representatives from the following countries attended the ENPI-SEIS country visits:

- NFP Turkey (Ceren Uncu Ağaçdıken, Ministry of Environment and Forestry) participated in the country visit to Azerbaijan,
- NFP Romania (Victor Minchevici, Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Romania) cancelled his participation in the visit to Moldova at the very last moment due to urgent and unexpected obligations in the Ministry but his presentation was given by another colleague,
- NFP Poland (Barbara Albiniak, Chief Inspectorate for Environmental Protection in Poland) joined the visit to Belarus.

The visits held so far have established the need for particular regional emphasis on transboundary waters, greenhouse gas inventory development and air quality monitoring, as well as municipal and hazardous waste statistics/information. All of the countries are keen to modernise their systems in line with European standards. Some of them are working towards EU membership and hence are ready to approximate their legislation in line with the EU.

Similarly to the visits to the ENP South countries, the EEA team has informed the EU Delegations in the partner countries of the project objectives and activities, and subject to their availability have held briefing/de-briefing meetings with appointed person(s) from the Delegation in the margins of the country visits. A list of EU Delegations' representatives met during the country visits is provided in the table in Annex 3.

Currently the EEA team is working with the project national focal points (jointly with the contractor ZOI) to produce nationally endorsed Country Reports updating the state-of-play reports and presenting options for follow-up actions and activities to be discussed and agreed in the annual steering committee in November 2011 for implementation in 2012-2014. Options include regional workshops, training events, expert exchanges, twinning projects, capacity building activities and the use of EEA/Eionet tools and websites, including Eye on Earth. The Country Reports will be published on the project website once finalised and approved at national level.

Table 3 summarises the status of the Country Reports produced by mid-September. Due to the fact that the visits to Moldova and Belarus were carried out during the drafting phase of the current progress report and the production of these Country Reports is only starting, there is not much progress to report at this stage. It is to be noted that mission reports are available for the below visits carried out.

Table 3. Status of the documents produced following the country visits conducted to ENP East (as of mid-September 2011)

Country	Date of the visit	Documents produced, status	Comments
Armenia	6-7/04/2011	Country Report endorsed by the Ministry and Statistical Office submitted to EEA in English	Final version quality-checked by EEA for publication, translated into Russian and available on the project website in both languages
Georgia	09-10/06/2011	Meeting report (EN draft)	EEA comments submitted Prepared by FWC Country Report under preparation by the country/FWC
Azerbaijan	13-14/06/2011	Country report submitted for EEA comments	Second draft incorporating EEA comments expected very shortly
Moldova	6-7/09/2011	Work on country report has started, first draft expected mid-October	EEA mission report currently available. Country Report to be finalised by end 2011
Belarus	13-14/09/2011	Work on country report is at a starting phase	EEA mission report currently available. Country Report to be finalised by end 2011

Building on the Country reports and discussions held during the country visits held, Table 4 summarises the main national priorities and thematic issues to be in focus of further capacity building activities.

Similarly to the approach with the ENP South, EEA plans to further address these themes through regional workshops/events and technical support from EEA colleagues, Eionet National Focal Points and European Topic Centres as needed.

Table 4. Overview of the ENP-East country visits outputs

Country	National priorities and potential thematic issues for capacity building	Actions agreed within ENPI-SEIS project
Armenia	Infrastructure development Provision of guidance/methodology in introduction of integrated environment system	Assistance for improving electronic reporting systems Pilot project on the Lake Sevan (including inventory of separate components of the ecosystem)
Azerbaijan	Institutional cooperation EU association agreement	Extended expert visit to support on Water Framework Directive

	Monitoring and integration of environmental data across themes and institutions	Long-term visiting expert on waste classification and reporting Air emissions - development of a complete greenhouse gas inventory
Georgia	Environment is not a priority for the moment (many reorganisations and budget cuts) Sharing of responsibility and institutional cooperation	Support in creating waste inventory: start with a pilot project on an industrial waste inventory based on indicators Training and capacity building, especially in the areas of data management (including GIS)
Moldova	Monitoring and information infrastructure development Development of various national eServices	Trainings/expert exchanges and infrastructure tools to align with EU requirements on water, then air/climate, then waste
Belarus	Validating, sharing and integrating environmental data across various institutes/environmental themes	Trainings/expert exchanges on adaptation of their systems to modern standards on air (especially GHG inventories), then water, then waste

It has to be highlighted that the State-of-Play and Country Reports produced as part of the project are focused on the national and international legal framework, monitoring and informatics infrastructure, data availability and indicators. They are complemented by the sub-regional assessment of assessment reports prepared as part of the package for the Astana Conference under funding from a range of donors (available at <http://aoa.ew.eea.europa.eu/>).

b. Links to the ‘Environment for Europe’ process and Astana Conference

The Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference took place in Astana, Kazakhstan from 21 to 23 September 2011. The Conference was prepared in accordance with the provisions of Reform Plan of the ‘Environment for Europe’ process. In support of the Ministerial Conference in Astana, EEA has prepared “Europe's environment — An Assessment of Assessments” (EE-AoA) report, which provides a comprehensive overview of available sources of environmental information across the region that directly relate to the themes in focus at the Conference: water and related ecosystems, and green economy. In addition, EEA was coordinating the production of four regional AoA reports together with the RECs in the region and the relevant environmental networks from the former EECCA region. In the context of ENPI-SEIS project of high relevance are the regional AoAs for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and for Russian Federation. Their findings and recommendations, endorsed by the recipient countries, represent a good basis for shaping the possible EEA support in the field of indicators and assessment in the region on SEIS principles. Moreover, from thematic perspective both water and green economy fall fully or partially also within the remit of the project.

The Astana Ministerial Declaration emphasises the need for a regular process of environmental assessment, supported by a Shared Environmental Information System for the pan-European region, covering 56 countries.

EEA underlined that the backbone of such a regular process of reporting includes:

- A Mechanism for building up comparable indicators and putting in place associated data flows by sharing and exchanging environmental information.
- Gradually extending SEIS across the whole region (to contribute among other things to the implementation of the Aarhus Convention).
- Support of an effective network with which to facilitate the work using the EEA Eionet network is a possible model.
- The building of relevant national capacities.
- All this should be underpinned by a commitment to increase relevant capacity building and investments in the needed relevant assessment, information and data services including near-real time monitoring, modern observing systems and statistics.

The AoA illustrates the potential of SEIS and its guiding principles in facilitating comparison and transparency, and also demonstrates a key goal of SEIS to maximise the value of information collected. The AoA also highlights the importance of engaging a mix of information, tools and actors as a response to the systemic policy challenges today.

Underpinning SEIS, the EEA has put forward Eye on Earth as a global platform for creating and sharing geographic information in order to enable institutions, scientists, businesses and citizens to use Eye on Earth for their information needs and engage them in participating in an online 'environmental community'. As such, SEIS and Eye on Earth are helping to put the Aarhus Convention into practice.

Based on the findings of the Assessment of Assessments, Ministers in Astana decided to establish a regular process of environmental assessment and to develop SEIS across the region, which will help underpin further activities within ENPI-SEIS project in the East.

c. Preparation of 'SEIS Cookbook'

Within the project, preparation of a 'SEIS Cookbook' was started in June 2011. It is planned as a guidance document to help in the development of the three inter-connected components of SEIS (inter-institutional cooperation, infrastructure and content) in the ENP countries building on the experience, progress and plans for further SEIS implementation in the EEA/Eionet member and cooperating countries. It is envisaged that the 'cookbook' will support sharing of experience, information and practices across various networks to the benefit of successful SEIS implementation in Europe and the ENP region, linking to initiatives assisting the setup of National Spatial Data Infrastructures (NSDI) in the ENP countries compatible with the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure (GSDI) and INSPIRE, promoting the use of GMES for monitoring transboundary environmental issues and facilitating good practice experience in the field of information sharing.

It is expected that the European Commission will publish a SEIS implementation plan in the last quarter of 2011, which will also have an impact on integrating SEIS developments in the cooperation with the whole ENP region and Russian Federation through the 'cookbook'.

An outline of 'SEIS Cookbook' was previewed in the EEA side-event on SEIS in Astana and presented at the EEA stand. The first draft of the 'cookbook' is currently in preparation by EEA jointly with ZOI Environment Network and it is expected to be finalised by the end of 2011 (draft outline enclosed in Annex 6). It is envisaged that this guidance document will be to the benefit of various EEA stakeholders and will be kept as a living document with examples of SEIS implementation in EEA member, cooperating and ENPI-SEIS partner countries.

3.4. Activities under Area 4: Assessment of the progress of regional environmental initiatives

Similarly to the ENP South under section 2, during the period covered there is not much to report under this activity area, since the assessment activity will build on the work done in the above three areas and is envisaged to start at a later stage of the project implementation once the requirements from the Astana Conference are clear. Therefore, there was no budget expenditure to report under this area for either ENP region.

Activities foreseen will be closely linked to the work of other relevant partners in the ENP East and Russian Federation and will be in line with EU and international policy demands, in particular processed under the Eastern Partnership, follow-up from the pan-European Ministerial Conference in Astana, process towards preparation of EEA SOER2015, etc. The priority areas to be covered by the ENPI East in the planned regional reporting contribution will be identified in consultation with the countries and in line with the most up-to-date developments in the region, emerging also after the Astana Ministerial. While already at this stage there are common themes emerging for the East region (see 3.3 above), it is obvious that each country is placing different emphasis on the regional priority areas identified at the initial phase of the ENPI-SEIS project.

In preparation of the country visits in the region, EEA has started compiling relevant material for each country visit into Country folders, containing basic country information, as well as an overview of the country's current status in negotiations/relations with EU, relevant reports/country profiles/overviews, recent SoE reports, extracts from international databases, including outline of the reporting contribution as background materials for the use of the team and other EEA colleagues.

As indicated under section 2, the planned activities linked to this as well as to the three priority areas foresee capacity building and targeted training sessions for experts both from environment and statistics in the field of environment reporting and indicators in line with EU/EEA methodology and tools, which should also enhance capacity building and sharing of information between the two networks and on regional level.

3.5. Activities under Area 5: Communication and dissemination

Regular communication and dissemination of the deliverables is a key element of the successful project implementation. For the reporting period, the developments recorded under section 2.5 referring to the project website development, production of project newsletter (translated also to Russian and published on the web), as well as various communication products (i.e. project leaflet, briefing, SEIS factsheet and other communication materials), along with the list of missions and meetings, are identical for both regions covered by the ENPI-SEIS project and thus also embrace the six countries in ENP East and the Russian Federation.

Communication materials produced within the project were prepared largely by the EEA project team, are available in both English and Russian languages and are continuously disseminated at relevant events targeting partners and stakeholders active in the East neighbouring countries.

A note summarising progress on the project so far, as well as a preview of the 'SEIS cookbook' were prepared for the Ministerial conference in Astana held on 21-23 September 2011.

a. Synergies with other regional EU-funded projects / initiatives in the East region

The European Commission (DG DEVCO principally) is supporting a number of ENPI Regional Projects in the East, alongside initiatives funded by other international donors. In order to maximise the outcome of these actions and moreover support SEIS development in the region, it is essential to keep in contacts with other regional project and identify possibilities for synergies and joint activities in countries/region organized by various projects, as well as to share information on upcoming events, missions and trainings in the countries.

Following a meeting of the team leaders of ENPI East Regional Projects on Environment, Statistics, Civil Protection and Climate Change organised by DEVCO on 2 March 2011 in Brussels, EEA has established contacts and maintains communication with the leaders and national coordinators (wherever applicable) of following regional projects:

- Waste Governance project (project on-going and regular communication exchange with ENPI-SEIS activities, website: www.wastegovernance.org)
- Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (www.enpi-fleg.org) – second phase under negotiations
- Air Quality Governance in ENPI EAST Countries (project launched in January 2011 with EEA participation): <http://www.enpi-info.eu/eastportal/opportunities/18566/Service-contract-forecast-for-%E2%82%AC7-million-Air-Quality-Governance-project-in-ENPI-East>
- Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Man-Made and Natural Disasters in the ENPI East Region (PPRD-East) – initial phase of the project, web-site under development: http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id=211&id_type=10
- Social and Economic Benefits of Enhanced Environmental Protection in the ENPI countries (project completed in June 2011, final results/reports to be made available on the project website: www.environment-benefits.eu)
- Trans-Boundary River Management Phase II for the Kura River basin – Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan (project in the final stage of completion: www.kuraarasbasin.net)
- Strengthening the Local Authorities Role in the European Neighbourhood Region – Cooperation in Urban Development and Dialogue (CIUDAD Supporting Mechanism): www.ciudad-programme.eu
- Support for the implementation of the Convention on biological diversity programme of work on protected areas in the EU Neighbourhood policy East area and Russia: extension of the implementation of the EU's NATURA 2000 principles through the Emerald Network (action supported by the Council of Europe: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/nature/econetworks/JP_en.asp)
- Activities and events organised/supported by UNECE under various Protocols.

b. EU-Russian Federation Environmental Dialogue and Partnership for Modernization in the Area of Convergence of Environmental Protection Systems

As part of the European Commission (DG ENV) initiative on the convergence of Russian and EU Environmental Monitoring, EEA has been supporting since the second half of 2010 the cooperation with the Russian Federation, also with a view to contribute to the support in developing SEIS principles in the region. Within this dialogue, two high-level meetings have been held so far between experts from EEA and the Russian Federation's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry of Economic Development, Roshydromet, Roslesinform, Roscosmos and other national institutions: one in Copenhagen on 15-16 November 2010 and a second one in Moscow on 7-8 April 2011. The ENPI-SEIS project was presented to the Russian representatives in the Ministry of Environment during the visit to Moscow highlighting the need for holding a country visit to the Russian Federation in the coming months of 2011.

Following some adjustments to the initial project plan of joint activities agreed in April 2011, five projects on environmental convergence and improving environmental monitoring have been identified for the cooperation activities in 2011-2012 as follows:

- 1) Forest and land cover monitoring
- 2) Shared Environmental Information System (with specific focus on air quality and water quality in surface and groundwater)
- 3) Long range transport of pollutants
- 4) Improved waste and hazardous chemicals management
- 5) Space technologies and training for sustainable development.

It was agreed that these bilateral projects are to be supported by an in-kind contribution from EEA and Russian partners, reinforcing also the cooperation within the ENPI-SEIS project.

Progress was made in the area of air quality data, where subsequent to experts meeting in June 2011 in Copenhagen, there was an agreement made between the EEA and the Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring of the Russian Federation (Roshydromet) for an exchange of up-to-date air quality observation data providing also an improved basis for air quality assessments, decisions and public information. This agreement was formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding establishing the necessary legal and administrative basis for exchange of up-to-date air quality data and thereby providing the possibility to publish this data on EEA platform on the web. As of today the MoU signed by the EEA Executive Director was sent for counter-signature to the Russian partner, Roshydromet.

The collaboration aims at bringing a Eurasian added value to EU and Russian Federation efforts in harmonizing the air quality monitoring practices and improving the dissemination of its outputs at the continental scale, building upon the monitoring networks involved and the technical facilities of the collaborating parties. A key objective is to demonstrate the technical feasibility of air quality data exchange across Eurasia, which would have implication to the cooperation within the framework of ENPI-SEIS project.

The ENPI-SEIS country visit to Russian Federation, the dates of which are still to be confirmed (tentatively planned for the beginning of November), will make use of the negotiations held so far and activities agreed within this bilateral cooperation.

3.6. Activities under Area 6: Management and coordination

As already indicated under section 2.6, the majority of management and coordination issues are relevant for the overall cooperation within ENPI-SEIS project and cover both with ENP East and Russian Federation, and ENP South region. What has been mentioned about the Management Group and Steering Committee meetings applies equally herewith and hence is not repeated.

Particular attention here should also be paid to the cooperation with UNECE since EEA has a long history of fruitful cooperation with UNECE in working with the region. The main aim of this partnership is to avoid duplication of effort, to maximise on possibilities for joint work and, in particular, to support and provide inputs to the "Environment for Europe" process, including for the latest Ministerial Conference in Astana. UNECE is an important partner in the on-going ENPI SEIS project and has been participating in all the country visits to the ENP East countries held so far.

Some difficulty in fully engaging with the ENP East countries and Russian Federation and various partner initiatives comes from the fact that there was no dedicated member of staff (CA) recruited in-house to work full time with this region (a candidate was offered the CA post but declined).

As in the section for the South region (2.6), it has to be underlined that throughout the execution of the project so far regular dialogue has been maintained with the Project Manager(s) in the Contracting Authority in DG DEVCO (before and after the reorganisation of 1 June 2011) on the project implementation and various contractual and management issues, as well as discussions with the other members of the Management Group on planning and implementation of country visits and various project activities.

4. BUDGET COMMITMENTS AND EXPENDITURE

Table 5 below indicates the commitments done to date that come up to 29.0% of the total project budget. In Table 6 is presented an overview of the payments made as of 15 September 2011. As indicated under 1.4 above, the payments made within the first reporting period from January to 15 September 2011 represent 19.4% of the total project budget.

Table 5. Budget commitments, distributed per area and region (in Euro)

	ENP EAST	ENP SOUTH	TOTAL
Area 1. Indicators	127,400.00	13,255.00	140,655.00
Area 2. Data flows	0	0	0
Area 3. SEIS infrastructure	304,450.00	397,900.00	702,350.00
Area 4. Assessment	0	0	0
Area 5. Communication	15,146.50	15,146.50	30,293.00
Area 6. Networking and management	393,419.00	393,419.00	786,838.00
	840,415.50	819,720.50	1,660,136.00

Table 6. Budget payments, distributed per area and region (in Euro)

	ENP EAST	ENP SOUTH	TOTAL
Area 1. Indicators	116,334.46	13,057.01	129,391.47
Area 2. Data flows	518.58	253.85	772.42
Area 3. SEIS infrastructure	239,014.85	261,088.71	500,103.56
Area 4. Assessment	0	0	0
Area 5. Communication	12,250.00	12,250.00	24,500.00
Area 6. Networking and management	230,402.93	227,124.38	457,527.30
	598,520.81	513,773.94	1,112,294.75

It is noted that the commitments and payments made are proceeding slower than envisaged in the agreed Terms of Reference, due to longer recruitment process of the team members, slower start of work and aim to ensure in the initial implementation phase that regional and national needs are met. With the planned work for the next phase, additional contract support in the countries, training and expert capacity building activities, it is expected that the EEA will spend at least 1.4 mio Euro and be in line with the payment schedule.

5. LIST OF EEA PROJECT COORDINATION TEAM

(Status September 2011)

ENPI-SEIS Coordinator

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6. LIST OF ENPI-SEIS MISSIONS AND MEETINGS

Below is a list of the conducted missions and meetings in the reported period by the ENPI-SEIS Project Coordination team and relevant EEA colleagues in the period January – 15 September 2011. Other upcoming meetings till end 2011 have also been mentioned.

List of missions completed in the period January – 15 September 2011

Date	Place	Objective of the mission	Name of the Attendee(s)
20 January	Brussels, Belgium	Kick-off meeting of the Air Quality Governance Project	Gordon McInnes
2 March	Brussels, Belgium	Meeting of ENPI East Projects on Environment, Statistics and Civil Protection	Galina Georgieva
29 March	Brussels, Belgium	Presentation SEIS Project under the Horizon 2020 initiative	Gordon McInnes
6-7 April	Yerevan, Armenia	ENPI-SEIS Country Visit to Armenia	Gordon McInnes, Stefan Jensen, Selma Güven, Saila Kumputie
6-7 April	Algiers, Algeria	ENPI-SEIS Country Visit to Algeria	Ronan Uhel, Cécile Roddier-Quefelec, Hans Dufourmont, Dezső Gábor Mikus
7-8 April	Moscow, Russia	Workshop on Russian and EU environmental monitoring as part of the EU Environmental Dialogue in the Area of Convergence of Environmental Protection Systems	Jacqueline McGlade, Chris Steenmans, Galina Georgieva, Nikolaj Bock, Valentin Foltescu
27-28 April	Amman, Jordan	ENPI-SEIS Country Visit to Jordan	Jacqueline McGlade, Chris Steenmans, Cécile Roddier-Quefelec, Dezső Gábor Mikus
3-4 May	Cairo, Egypt	ENPI-SEIS Country Visit to Egypt	Gordon McInnes, Chris Steenmans, Barbara Clark, Cécile Roddier-Quefelec
11-12 May	Ramallah, Palestinian Authority	ENPI-SEIS Country Visit to the Palestinian Authority	Ronan Uhel, Stefan Jensen, Cécile Roddier-Quefelec, Dezső Gábor Mikus
25-26 May	Rabat, Morocco	TAIEX workshop on environmental accounts	Cécile Roddier-Quefelec
9-10 June	Tbilisi, Georgia	ENPI-SEIS Country Visit to Georgia	Gordon McInnes, Stefan Jensen, Saila Kumputie
13-14 June	Baku, Azerbaijan	ENPI-SEIS Country Visit to Azerbaijan	Gordon McInnes, Stefan Jensen, Saila Kumputie
16 June	Brussels, Belgium	DG RTD workshop on International	Galina Georgieva

		cooperation projects in support to Research and Innovation Policies and Competence Building	
4 July	Athens, Greece	Bilateral with UNEP/MAP	Ronan Uhel, Cécile Roddier-Quefelec
5-6 July; 7 July	Tel Aviv, Israel; Ramat Gan, Israel	ENPI-SEIS Country Visit to Israel	Ronan Uhel, Hans Dufourmont, Cécile Roddier-Quefelec, Dezső Gábor Mikus
11-13 July	Geneva, Switzerland	3 rd session of the UNECE Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators	Gordon McInnes, Galina Georgieva, Cécile Roddier-Quefelec
6-7 September	Chisinau, Moldova	ENPI-SEIS Country Visit to Moldova	Gordon McInnes, Stefan Jensen, Saila Kumputie
13-14 September	Minsk, Belarus	ENPI-SEIS Country Visit to Belarus	Gordon McInnes, David Stanners, Galina Georgieva, Dezső Gábor Mikus
12-15 September	Rabat, Morocco	Kick-off of a US State Department project implemented to support the National Environment Observatory information system	Cécile Roddier-Quefelec

List of ENPI-SEIS meetings held and planned in 2011

Date	Place	Name of meeting
30-31 March	Copenhagen, Denmark	Review Monitoring and Research Sub-Group Meeting
12 April	Copenhagen, Denmark	Bilateral Meeting with the Team Leader (Sergei Skokov) of the Air Quality Governance Project
11 July	Geneva, Switzerland	Discussion with the representative of the Black Sea Commission (Volodymyr Myroshnychenko)
12 July	Geneva, Switzerland	Discussion with the Director General of the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT) (Vladimir Sokolin)
24-25 November	Copenhagen, Denmark	Annual Steering Committee Meeting with regional workshops for ENP East and ENP South
29-30 November	Casablanca, Morocco	First Assessment Workshop of the MIRA WP 7 Working Group to Support the Development of the Scientific Agenda of H2020
Early December	Athens, Greece	UNEP/MAP Focal Point meeting

Upcoming missions in the period 16 September – December 2011

Date	Destination	Objective of the Mission	Name of the Attendee(s)
20-23 September	Astana, Kazakhstan	7 th Ministerial Conference	Jacqueline McGlade, Chris Steenmans, Katja Rosenbohm, Arthur Girling, Adriana Gheorghe, Elisabetta Scialanca, Ove Caspersen, Peter Kristensen, Stefan Speck, Saila Kumputie
29 September	Brussels, Belgium	Eastern Partnership Platform 2 - Panel on Environment and Climate Change	Galina Georgieva
18-20 October	Geneva, Switzerland	4 th session of the UNECE Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators	Gordon McInnes, Cécile Roddier-Quefelec, Galina Georgieva
20-21 October	Geneva, Switzerland	12 th session of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA)	Gordon McInnes, Adriana Gheorghe, Cécile Roddier-Quefelec
25-26 October	Beirut, Lebanon	ENPI-SEIS Country Visit to Lebanon	Ronan Uhel, Cécile Roddier-Quefelec, Dezső Gábor Mikus
1-2 November	Tunis, Tunisia	ENPI-SEIS Country Visit to Tunisia	Ronan Uhel, Cécile Roddier-Quefelec, Dezső Gábor Mikus
7-8 November	Kiev, Ukraine	ENPI-SEIS Country Visit to Ukraine	Gordon McInnes, Galina Georgieva, Milan Chrenko
10-11 November	Moscow, Russia	ENPI-SEIS Country Visit to Russian Federation	Gordon McInnes, Galina Georgieva