



Towards a Shared Environmental Information System ENPI-SEIS Project

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The newsletter is available in English, French & Russian

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Dear Reader,

We are pleased to present you the first issue of the ENPI-SEIS newsletter. It will be distributed electronically two times a year around June and December. We hope you will find it useful and share with your colleagues. Should you have ideas, comments or proposals for issues to be covered by this newsletter, we will be happy to hear from you.

I. ENPI-SEIS PROJECT

The project 'Towards a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) in the European Neighbourhood' was launched in December 2009 to promote the protection of the environment in the European Neighbourhood region through the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI).

The project is implemented by the European Environment Agency (EEA) together with partner countries in the ENP South, ENP East and the Russian Federation, bringing together national environmental and statistical organisations leading in the field of environmental information. It will provide a long-term and sustainable perspective for cooperation with the partner countries, as part of the cooperation within the policy framework of the Eastern Partnership, Union for the Mediterranean, Horizon2020 etc.

The project is financed through a service contract managed by DG EuropeAid and is envisaged to run until June 2014.

For more information on the project partners and objectives, please refer to the leaflet which is available in English, Russian and French at the project website: <http://enpi-seis.ew.eea.europa.eu/communication/leaflet>

II. RECENT EVENTS

II.1 H2020 Review Monitoring and Research Sub-Group Meeting in Copenhagen 30-31 March 2011

The second meeting of the Horizon2020 RMR Sub-Group that was held on 30-31 March 2011 in EEA premises in Copenhagen gathered more than 40 experts from the Southern Mediterranean and West Balkan partner countries.

This meeting was aimed at taking stock of the most recent developments in H2020 initiative, progress in the ENPI-SEIS project and links with relevant research activities in the Mediterranean region. Organised around breakout groups, 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 meeting was extremely constructive and came out with several practical next steps; in particular the development of pilots by the countries testing and demonstrating what can be achieved measuring progress on the three H2020 priorities and the process needed for this. The EEA has prepared draft outlines for the pilots on the basis of the meeting discussions and the UNEP/MAP indicator proposal, which has been shared with the RMR sub-group participants for comments and inputs. The draft outline as well as detailed minutes of the RMR meeting and other documentation from the RMR sub-group meeting 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>

II.2 Country visits

The EEA started a first round of ENPI-SEIS country visits to the ENP South and ENP East region in early April 2011. As of today visits were conducted to the following 7 partners: Algeria, Jordan, Egypt, Palestinian Authority, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

The purpose of these two-day visits is to bring together existing country networks which manage environmental information, to identify country-specific elements and needs related to the three SEIS components (content, infrastructure, institutional cooperation), to obtain feedback on country specific needs and readiness for SEIS implementation in the priority areas identified, as well as to contribute to the further priority development and possible identification of common indicators. Country visits to the rest of the ENP partners will continue in the coming months of 2011.

During the first Steering Committee meeting with the countries held in November 2010, the countries agreed on the priority themes to be addressed during the initial phase of the project. For the ENP South, the priority areas are generally in line with the priority areas of the H2020 initiative and focus on urban waste water, municipal waste and industrial emissions, as well as fresh and marine water. For the ENP East and Russian Federation, the priority areas are: 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 and eventually air quality.

Following these visits the appointed National Focal Points are working together with EEA to draft country reports with lists of actions. These reports will be made available on the website once finalised. Some materials made available during the country visits, lists of participants in the meetings and photos are already available under the following link: <http://enpi-seis.ew.eea.europa.eu/project-activities/country-visits> Below you will find short summaries from the country visits conducted so far.

Country visit to Algeria 6-7 April 2011 (Algiers)

The two-day visit, organized within the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, was conducted in plenary sessions with a range of Algerian institutions active in the environment. The workshop was opened by Mr. Benhadjoudja, Head of Cabinet and Ronan Uhel, Head of Programme, EEA. The presentations and discussions helped to address the role of the data and information, accessibility, confidentiality, accountability of institutions, expertise needed to ensure quality and data streams at different levels in Algeria.

The setting up of a National Environmental Information System by facilitating co-operation and promoting open data policies was welcomed and it was suggested to conduct a pilot information system on liquid discharges at sea - covering the whole chain of information production from monitoring mechanisms to the collection, data validation, data access, analysis and preparation indicators, to international reporting.

Country visit to Jordan 27-28 April 2011 (Amman)

The visit was organised at the premises of the Department of Statistics and started with a bilateral meeting between Dr. Haidar Fraihat, the General Director of Department of Statistics in Jordan, and Prof. Jacqueline McGlade, EEA Executive Director. The agenda of the country visit was organised around two days of plenary sessions with approximately 20 participants from several Jordanian organisations.

Dr Ahmed Qaterneh, Ministry of Environment Secretary General opened the meeting. During the meeting the possible establishment of an ENPI-SEIS core group across government and non-government institutions, including focal points for key partners was discussed. It was also agreed to develop ideas about e-government based on SEIS principles as well as exchange knowledge and experiences on implementing a Spatial Data Infrastructure including inputs from GEO/GMES for planning and environmental management.



Country visit to Egypt 3-4 May (Cairo)

The workshop organised at the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency was opened by H.E. Eng Maged George, Minister of Environment, H.E. Dr Nadia Makram Ebeid, CEDARE Executive Director, H.E. Gen. Abu Bakr El Gendy, Head of CAPMAS and Gordon McInnes, EEA Deputy Director.

Around 30 participants were present in the 2 day plenary session with presentation on various aspects of the three H2020 priority areas; waste water, municipal waste and industrial emissions followed by decisions on possible national priorities within these three priority areas.

Country visit to Palestinian Authority 11-12 May 2011 (Ramallah)

The workshop was organised at the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Approximately 20 participants from different organisations were present throughout the two days. The workshop was opened by Mr Afif Abdul-Aziz, Assistant for President of Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and Mr Jameel MTour, Deputy Chairman of the Environment Quality Authority and Ronan Uhel, Head of Programme, EEA.



Among the national presentations were the mandate, role and activities of the Environment Quality Authority (by EQA), the situation of environment statistics in the Palestinian statistical system (by Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics) and the process of developing a National Environment Information System (by Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics). The thematic presentations focused on municipal waste, industrial emissions, as well as water and waste water. The discussions allowed formulating some lines of actions such as the need for an implementation plan for the national Environment Information System, to streamline/review existing indicators, to analyse needs and gaps reviewing underpinning data flows as well as to discuss priority thematic areas.

Country visit to Armenia 6-7 April 2011 (Yerevan)

As part of the country visit, bilateral meetings were held with the First Deputy Minister for Nature Protection, President of the National Statistical Service and senior staff from the Environmental Impact Monitoring Centre, Hydro-meteorological Service, Water Resource Management Agency and Waste Management Division, providing an insight into the state of play in the areas of air pollution, water, waste and land management.

The plenary session on second day was opened by Simon Papyan, First Deputy Minister and Gordon McInnes, Deputy Director, EEA. It was attended by around 30 participants and included presentations on national data/infrastructure for air pollution, water quality and management, administrative-statistical information and the development of a national environmental information system with UNDP-GEF funding, as well as update of the current situation presented by the environment and statistics national focal points and UNECE presentation on related activities.

Among other points, Armenia raised the need for developing methodological guidance on the introduction of integrated environmental monitoring system as well as assistance for improving electronic reporting systems. A pilot project on the Lake Sevan ecosystem (including inventory of separate components of the ecosystem) was proposed.

Country visit to Georgia 9-10 June (Tbilisi)

During the first day of the visit, a workshop was organised together with relevant institutions and stakeholders. The plenary session was opened by Nino Tkhilava, Head of Department of Environmental Policy and International Relations on behalf of the Deputy Minister George Zedginidze and Gordon McInnes, Deputy Director, EEA. Presentations were given by EEA on the project and SEIS development, while the Georgian representatives talked about the national data/infrastructure for air pollution, water quality and management and waste as well as on climate change studies and GHG inventory, environmental pollution monitoring, environmental hydrogeology and hydrometeorology. UNECE gave a presentation on the pan-European requirements for environmental observations and reporting. The workshop was attended by around 30 participants.

Bilateral meetings on the second day of the visit were held with the Deputy Head of the Natural Environmental Agency, departments of Pollution Monitoring and Hydrometeorology, Deputy Director of the National Statistical Service, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Environment Protection and senior staff from the Ministry, covering waste, water, air and climate change. More specifically, waste was raised as a priority area and a pilot project on an industrial waste inventory was suggested. In addition, there was a call for training and capacity building, especially in the areas of data management (including GIS).



Country visit to Azerbaijan 13-14 June (Baku)

Similarly to Georgia, the country visit was organised as a workshop with relevant institutions and stakeholders on the first day followed by bilateral meetings with a range of representatives from relevant institutions during the second day. The 25 participants in the plenary session were welcomed by the Deputy Minister Firdovsi Aliyev and Gordon McInnes, EEA Deputy Director. Further presentations looked into the national data and infrastructure for air pollution, water quality and management and a presentation from Mr Mikhail Kokine of UNECE on the pan-European requirements for environmental observations and reporting. There was also a presentation from a representative of Eionet NFP-Turkey, sharing experience in working with EEA and the development of SEIS in Turkey.



Bilateral meetings were held with the EU Delegation Head of Political Section and Programme Manager, with the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, Deputy Chairman of the National Statistical Committee, and concluded by a working meeting with senior staff from the Ministry, covering the three priority areas of waste, water, air and climate change. The possibility of having visiting experts on Water Framework Directive and on waste classification and reporting was discussed.

III CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

- Country visit to Israel during 5-6 July 2011
- Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators. Meeting in Geneva 11-13 July 2011 and in 18-20 October 2011
- Country visits to: ENP East – Moldova (6-7 September), Belarus (13-14 September); ENP South – Morocco (week 36 tbc), Tunisia (week 38 tbc)
- Regional workshops with the ENP East and Russian Federation and ENP South region back-to-back with the Steering Committee of the project in November 2011 in Copenhagen

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