



Towards a Shared Environmental Information System ENPI-SEIS Project

Biannual Newsletter
3rd Issue, June 2012

The newsletter is available in English, and will be translated to French, Russian & Arabic

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Dear Reader,

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

I. OVERVIEW OF 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 and building on regional activities being developed with UNECE and UNEP/MAP. 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.

In 2012, the activities are organised around the [project workplan of 2012](#) agreed jointly with the partner countries at the [ENPI-SEIS Steering Committee meeting in November 2012](#). Also specific country and/or regional capacity building activities as identified in the SEIS [Country Reports](#) - and action plans within these reports - are planned. We welcome countries comments and suggestions regarding specific activities. The Country Reports, most of which are now available on the ENPI-SEIS portal, serve in identifying further regional activities as well as country or subregional activities and provide the baseline against which to measure each country's progress towards SEIS. Also comparative regional overviews, focusing on SEIS developments in both East and South regions, will be published on the project website in the coming months. Agreement on development of a regional core set of indicators for both regions in line with the revised EEA Core Set of Indicators is a priority for 2012, as well as support to a trial delivery of data. This work will build on the EEA experience in developing indicators for the West Balkan region and their gradual integration into SEIS. For more information on the project partners and objectives, please refer to the leaflet which is available in Arabic, English, Russian and French at the project website: <http://enpi-seis.ew.eea.europa.eu/communication/read-leaflet>



II SHARED ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION SYSTEM AND SEIS COOKBOOK

As emphasised in various meetings and events organised by EEA also within the ENPI-SEIS project, SEIS is aiming to improve the collection, exchange and use of environmental data and information. It is a unifying concept that offers a model, process, methods and tools to take advantage of new technical opportunities. Through multiple use of the available data SEIS allows to reduce data collection costs as well as the administrative burden of the reporting

process. It also helps to support national and international reporting obligations and keep the public informed. It is more than just an electronic information system of systems - it's a long-term process for improving the sharing and use of environmental information. SEIS is based on seven principles stating that environmental information should be:

1. Managed as close as possible to its source.
2. Collected once, and shared with others for many purposes.
3. Readily available to easily fulfil reporting obligations.
4. Easily accessible to all users.
5. Accessible to enable comparisons at the appropriate geographical scale, and citizen participation.
6. Fully available to the general public, and at the national level in the relevant national language(s).
7. Supported through common, free open software standards.

The 'SEIS cookbook' is a guidance document aiming to gather in a systematic way the latest developments and initiatives in the field of access to and sharing of environmental information, taking place at both national and international levels.

A draft on-line version is available for comments in the following address: <http://seiscookbook.net>

The 'SEIS cookbook' is organised around different sections including introduction, background to the cookbook, history of the development of SEIS, explanation of the elements and structure of SEIS and practical examples on how to implement the concept of a Shared Environmental Information System.

The bulk of the cookbook is devoted to **case studies** which show national and international implementation of SEIS elements, including at the EEA. These examples are collectively used to identify an emerging set of common trends, methods, tools and lessons which have been integrated into the '**SEIS checklist**'. The checklist can be used as a self-assessment tool to measure progress and identify areas that need further development.

We welcome further good practice examples from countries as well as any comments on the guide itself. If you have input to the cookbook, please send it to us! (enpi-seis@eea.europa.eu)

The 'SEIS cookbook' is an electronic, living document, which will be continuously updated with new examples as technology develops and new systems to support sharing of environmental information are introduced.

The draft is open for review until end of October 2012 and once the updated version is available, the cookbook will be translated to French, Russian and Arabic.

Picture: A case study structured around the three pillars of SEIS and giving a summary of the system as well as contact details of the developers.

Cooperation with UNEP/MAP: in support to the South component of ENPI-SEIS project, UNEP/MAP will provide technical support to key ENPI-SEIS priorities, particularly in the areas of indicator development, PRTR, data flows as well as national and regional information systems and capacity building.

Working Group on Information Technology, SOUTH

The Working Group on Information Technology brings together high level experts with good knowledge of national databases. The aim of the IT Working Group is to facilitate the future dataflow, by working in close cooperation with the National Focal Points and the members of the Working group on Environmental Indicators. The IT Working Group is there to assess the situation in the countries, specify possible problems in accessing data necessary to provide the core set of indicators (CSI) that are being developed and identified by the Working Group on Environmental Indicators and to agree on technical solutions for enabling access to data in a sustainable common structure and format in line with SEIS principles. All related documents, including the nominated Working Group members are available on the [ENPI-SEIS web portal](#).

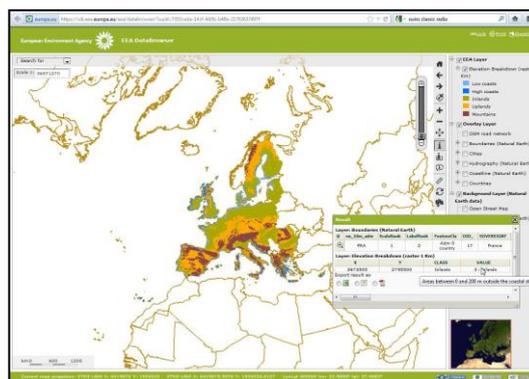


ENPI-SEIS IT Working Group for South region / metadata, 22-23 May 2012, Copenhagen, Denmark

The first meeting of the IT Working Group for South region was structured similarly to the earlier organised East workshop. It focused on identifying options and issues in relation to dataflow requirements for the key indicators proposed by the Working Group on Environmental Indicators. During

the workshop, Reportnet and other relevant EEA tools were presented. The participants of the meeting agreed to assist the work of the WG on Environmental Indicators by facilitating access to data. They asked for clear definition of the indicators (indicator fact sheets) and highlighted the importance of regular cooperation between the NFPs, members of the WG on Environmental Indicators and themselves. [Materials available here](#)

Picture: Geospatial data viewer using metadata/EEA



OTHER MEETINGS AND EVENTS / ENPI SOUTH

European Environment Agency, UN-ESCWA, UNSD Joint Workshop on Water Accounts and Statistics in Mediterranean countries, 20-22 March 2012, Beirut, Lebanon

The workshop, organised jointly with UN-ESCWA, UNSD and EEA, aimed at explaining how water accounts and statistics can be used for fact-based policymaking, providing guidance to the participants through hands-on examples on how to implement water accounts and statistics in their countries according to SEEA-Water and IRWS, following SEIS principles. Four Mediterranean countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestinian Authority) attended the meeting, with four participants from each country representing the National Statistical Offices and the Ministry of Environment and Water.

Using available data provided by the countries, the workshop also focused on how to establish and/or strengthen the coordination mechanisms for implementation of water accounts and statistics in the countries; and to identify the key steps in the preparation of a statistical program to complete water accounts and statistics. At the end of the workshop, countries agreed on the importance of completing water accounts in their countries. They set a work plan with a schedule for each country on how to complete the accounts. The last day of the workshop entailed a field visit to the water treatment plant in Lebanon that treats and disinfects potable water for Beirut. Participants and organizers were able to gain knowledge on the different steps of the water treatment process and have access to water related statistics. [Materials available here](#)

Events attended in the South region:

National seminar on Environmental Integrated Assessment, organised in the framework of the USA/UNEP Cooperation project with Morocco, 21–23 February 2012, Rabat

Regional training “*Improving capacity for monitoring industrial emissions*” organised by H2020 Capacity Building/Mediterranean Environment Programme, jointly with EEA, Athens, Greece, 11–14 June 2012.

Materials available here: <http://www.h2020.net/en/resources/training-materials/viewcategory/196.html>

ENPI EAST WORKING GROUPS & RELEVANT EVENTS

UNECE Joint Task Force for Environmental Indicators, EAST

The [UNECE Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators](#) (JTF) was established in 2009, bringing together the environmental and statistical networks in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South East Europe (SEE) countries in order to encourage their dialogue and cooperation towards the production of commonly agreed environmental indicators for producing state of environment reports.

From its establishment in 2009 until October 2011, the JTF has held five meetings with environmental experts and statisticians from the UNECE region and reviewed a total of 32 (out of 36) indicators covered by the [Indicator Guidelines](#) which were accepted in The Sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in Belgrade, 2007. Since 2011, EEA has been providing funding from the ENPI-SEIS project for the preparation of the JTF meetings as well as participation of ENPI East country representatives contributing to indicator development in the region. Similarly to the working group on Environmental Indicators in the South, the UNECE Joint Task Force for Environmental Indicators will have two meetings in 2012, [on 4-6 July 2012](#), and [30 October – 1 November 2012](#) in Geneva, Switzerland

The UNECE JTF at its meeting in July 2012 will consider a proposal for developing a regular reporting system for the regional set of indicators for the ENPI East starting with a selection from the indicators already reviewed by the Joint Task Force. This regional set is envisaged to comprise indicators in line with the agreed thematic priorities of the ENPI-SEIS project, for which there is good and comparable data in the countries, possibly related to national and international environmental reporting obligations.

Working Group on Information Technology, EAST

The Working Group on Information Technology brings together high level experts with good knowledge of national databases. The aim of the IT Working Group is to facilitate the future dataflow, by working in close cooperation with the National Focal Points and the national representatives of the UNECE Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators. The IT Working Group is there to assess the situation in the countries, specify possible problems in accessing data necessary to provide the core set of indicators (CSI) that are being developed and identified by the UNECE Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators and to agree on technical solutions for giving access to data in a sustainable common structure and format in line with SEIS principles. All related documents, including the nominated Working Group members are available on the [ENPI-SEIS web portal](#).

ENPI-SEIS IT Working Group for East region / metadata, 18-19 April 2012, Copenhagen, Denmark

The first meeting of the Working Group for East region was organised to identify options and issues in relation to dataflow requirements, to assess the national situation on possible gaps or accessibility problems arising from technical or institutional structures on dataflow, to give the participants an introduction to Reportnet and other relevant EEA tools - in order to assist them in using these systems for future reporting. The participants of the meeting agreed to support the indicator development process by assisting UNECE JTF members in filling in the on-line questionnaire on indicators to be reviewed at the coming UNECE Joint Task Force meeting. They also agreed to voluntarily test the use of EEA Reportnet system. [Materials available here](#)



OTHER MEETINGS AND EVENTS / ENPI EAST

UNECE/Eurostat/EEA Workshop on Waste Statistics, 11-13 April 2012, Geneva, Switzerland

Waste is one of the priority areas for cooperation within the ENPI-SEIS project, as identified by the ENPI East countries. This particular workshop on waste statistics focused on compilation and dissemination of waste statistics and aimed to provide common understanding of the EU requirements in terms of waste statistics.

Exchange of information on national waste management strategies and waste management plans - including waste data inventories and data collection methodologies – as well as sharing of practical techniques and challenges in producing statistical data and indicators on waste generation and waste management, were the main topics in this workshop. Around 55 national experts on waste management and production of waste statistics in 18 different EECCA and West Balkan countries attended the workshop. Experts from international organizations and relevant institutions in those countries were invited to share experience and broaden the exchange of knowledge and best practices. The workshop was organized by UNECE jointly with Eurostat and the European Environment Agency (EEA). [Materials available here](#)

Events and meetings attended

Task Force on Emission Inventories & Projections (TFEIP), Bern, Switzerland, 14 – 15 May 2012

Bilateral Meeting with Black Sea Commission Permanent Secretariat, Istanbul, Turkey, 24 – 25 May 2012

Some of the member countries of the Black Sea Commission are also partner countries in the ENPI-SEIS project (notably Georgia, Russian Federation and Ukraine) and the Black Sea Commission Permanent Secretariat and EEA had a bilateral meeting to explore possible collaboration activities. This meeting was seen as a first step to establish the basis for regular dialogue and future collaboration. Joint Meeting Report will be made available once finalised. Meeting documents are available [here](#)

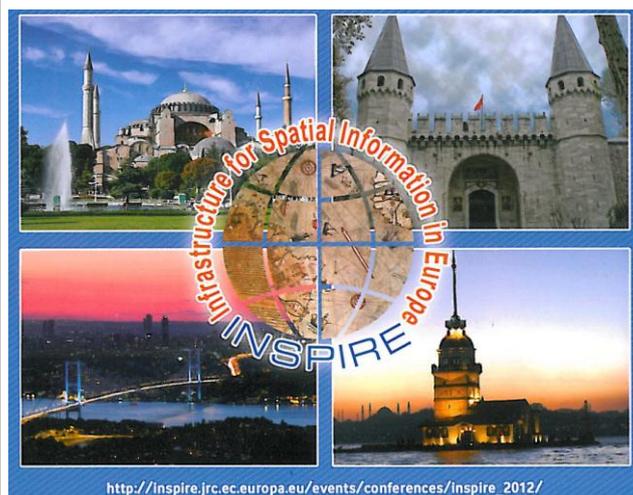
Training on Environmental Information Systems (EIS) and data policy, organised as a side event at the INSPIRE Conference for ENPI East and South regions, 25-26 June 2012, Istanbul, Turkey

As part of the process for the development of Environmental Information Systems (EIS) and Spatial Data Infrastructure in the neighbourhood countries, the ENPI-SEIS National Focal Points were invited to take part in a training organised in the framework of the "Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe" [INSPIRE Conference 2012](#) in Istanbul, Turkey.

During the two days, the country representatives had the chance to take part in the plenary sessions of the INSPIRE Conference. A dedicated session on Environmental Information Systems and Data Policy for the ENPI-SEIS National Focal Points and other interested participants was organised on 25 June 2012, during which the benefits of having integrated environmental information systems instead of thematic databases were discussed, and some concrete examples of building an environmental information system presented. The linkages and connections/complementarities between SEIS, INSPIRE and GMES were explained.

The following day the participants took part in an Eionet workshop of National Reference Centres on Environmental Information Systems (NRC EIS) and learned more about EEA activities and experiences in building SEIS and supporting INSPIRE as well as about the second phase of a Shared European National State of the Environmental system (SENSE 2 project). Materials of the different sessions are published [here](#).

More information about the INSPIRE Conference:
http://inspire.jrc.ec.europa.eu/events/conferences/inspire_2012



IV CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

The calendar of the upcoming ENPI-SEIS events will be updated regularly during the course of the year and can be found under the project website <http://enpi-seis.ew.eea.europa.eu/events>

The following events are planned to be held within the next months:

5th session of the UNECE Joint Task Force on environmental indicators, 4-6 July 2012, Geneva, Switzerland

Water Statistics Seminar for ENP East region, organised by Eurostat, in cooperation with EEA, 11-12 September 2012, Almaty, Kazakhstan

ENPI-SEIS IT Working Group for ENPI East and South regions on Database Streamlining and Data Exchange Formats, 19-21 September 2012, Skopje, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Workshop on water statistics and accounts for North African French speaking countries (Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, Mauritius and Tunisia) jointly organised with UNSD and the Office for North Africa of UNECA, 11-13 September 2012, Rabat, Morocco

Training workshop for ENPI East region on Emission Inventory organised in cooperation with Air Quality Governance project, 24-26 September 2012, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

ENP South Working Group on Environmental Indicators, 10-11 October 2012, Copenhagen, Denmark

6th session of the UNECE Joint Task Force on environmental indicators, 30 October-1 November 2012, Geneva, Switzerland

ENPI-SEIS Steering Committee meeting, 21- 22 November 2012, Copenhagen & QA/QC Training back to back to Steering Committee meeting, 20 November 2012 (tbc), Copenhagen

This project is funded by the European Union

For further information please contact: enpi-seis@eea.europa.eu Project portal: <http://enpi-seis.ew.eea.europa.eu/>

