

Summer 2014

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The project is funded by the European Union

H2020 regional assessment published

Countries bordering the south and east of the Mediterranean need to continually improve many aspects of environmental management to reduce pollution in the sea, according to a recently released assessment.

The "[Horizon 2020 Mediterranean report - Toward shared environmental information systems](#)" has been coordinated by the European Environment Agency (EEA) and the [United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan](#) (UNEP/MAP) with financial support from the [ENPI-SEIS project](#).

The assessment was part of the mid-term review of the Horizon 2020 Initiative, which aimed to reduce pollution in the Mediterranean by year 2020. It focuses on three main environmental topics: waste water and sanitation, solid municipal waste and industrial emissions.

The report covers all ENPI-SEIS South partner countries, namely Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia.

The findings of the report were presented at the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Change taking place in Athens, 13 May. These findings indicate that the progress in urban wastewater management is difficult to assess as the data available do not provide sound evidence and trends at the regional level. The municipal solid waste generation continues to grow (+15 % over the last 10 years), mostly due to population and economic growth. Southern Mediterranean countries produce half as much waste as the EU countries (270 kg/per capita/year compared to 520 kg/per capita/year in the EU27).

Analysis on industrial emissions and nutrients confirms the remained high pressures from land-based sources of pollution. While pollution from heavy metals in sea water decreases, local marine pollution from cities, industries and tourist resorts remains large with significant presence of macro waste on beaches and in the sea.

There are still many data gaps for the topics covered by the report, in particular for wastewater management. Countries should also invest in creating an emissions inventory to show annual emissions of pollutants from different industrial facilities, the report says.

The report can be downloaded from the EEA website: www.eea.europa.eu

Cooperation with key partners

Ministerial Conference in Athens

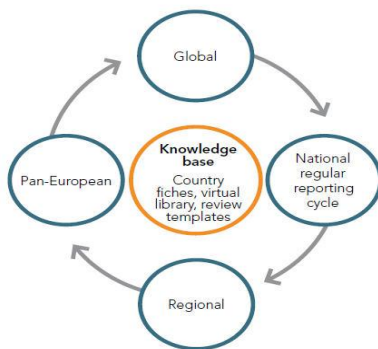


The declaration and all documents can be found from the UfM website <http://ufmsecretariat.org/>

Defining strategic directions to reduce pollution and increase resource efficiency in the Mediterranean region was at core during the Ministerial conference, organized by the Union for the Mediterranean in Athens, 13 May. The Ministers, responsible for Environment urged the shift towards sustainable consumption and production patterns for a green and low emission economy. At the end of the meeting, Ministers adopted Declaration, which among other provisions, foresees the launch of the second phase of the Horizon 2020 Initiative. It also provisions the establishment of the “UfM Climate Change Expert Group” to advance discussion on climate change priority actions, which will convene for its first time in October 2014. The Ministers welcomed the adoption of the Ten Year Framework Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (SCP) by the Heads of State in Rio+20. At the meeting, the EEA launched the H2020 Mediterranean report and had a dedicated exhibition stand. In his speech, Hans Bruyninckx, EEA Executive Director, said: ‘Countries have put tremendous efforts into submitting data and seeking a better understanding of the pressures on the Mediterranean, an important step in cutting the pollution of the sea. However, the region needs to work even harder together if it is to meet its target to depollute the sea by 2020.’

UNECE 8th Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators

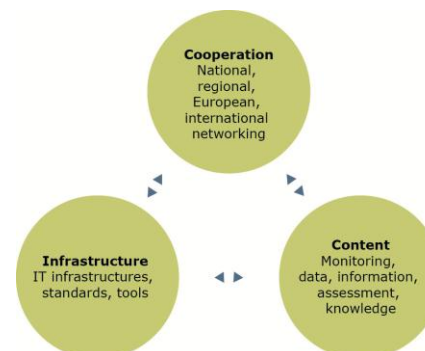
The production and sharing of eight identified regional indicators from the revised Indicators Guidelines was the main topic of discussions for the 8th session of the UNECE Joint Task Force (JTF) on Environmental Indicators, held on 13 - 15 May 2014 in Geneva. The eight indicators were reviewed in detail in advance of the meeting based on the information available on the national websites supplemented by additional clarification provided by the target countries. On that basis the UNECE Secretariat prepared an analytical paper describing the status of production and sharing of each of the core indicators in the target countries, including also 14 recommendations on their way forward.



The very good progress in making available on-line environmental information and indicators was acknowledged at the meeting. However, there are still limitations allowing access to the information integrated in the webpages. The lack of some indicators, links with references to data sources, data validation and metadata are some current gaps and should be further considered. In conclusions, actions relevant for each country regarding the implementation of the proposed recommendations have been put forward. Countries are expected to respond prior the upcoming 9th JTF in November 2014.

“Friends of SEIS”

A new group Friends of SEIS with a mandate to advise on how to monitor progress across the pan-European region on SEIS development met for the first time on 12th May 2014 in Geneva. This group, mandated at the last UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) meeting, will support and facilitate the exchange of experience on SEIS implementation across the region. It will also provide guidance to CEP on how to develop a regular reporting and assessment process underpinned by SEIS. At the meeting, the participants discussed draft document on targets and performance indicators for developing SEIS, prepared by UNECE Secretariat, which will be finalized for the CEP meeting in October. The Friends of SEIS group is expected to meet two to three times in the period 2014-2015. In the long run, it has to be decided of an existing structure that could take on board the task to regularly monitor and assess progress on SEIS at pan-European level.



PRTR Pilot exercise in Ankara

The initial results and lessons learned from the PRTR pilot exercises implemented by the ENP South partner countries (Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia) with the support of UNEP/MAP-MEDPOL were presented at a regional workshop in Ankara on 16-17 June. Despite encouraging advancements, the lessons learnt from the exercise point to the lack of legal framework; need for broader industries engagement; further development of pollutants' list; correct interpretation of emission factors and strengthening capacity for data and IT management. The UNEP/MAP Secretariat is currently preparing a detailed PRTR guidance to further support countries in this development, ensuring also adequate streamlining with the existing MEDPOL monitoring of pollutants.



SEIS side event in Maastricht

‘There is a need to better and systematically communicate about SEIS and benefits of sharing information between networks and organizations, - was the main conclusion from the panel debate at the side event organized by the EEA. The side event: *Advancing dissemination of environmental information and public participation through electronic information tools* took place during the UNECE 5th session of the Meeting of the Parties (MoP) to the Aarhus Convention on 1 July 2014 in Maastricht. The event aimed at presenting the latest status on evolution of SEIS by providing concrete examples of practical implementation. Georgia, among other countries from the pan-European region and representatives from EU, UNEP and UNECE, shared its national experience in implementing SEIS. At the event, the EEA was invited by the European Investment Bank (EIB) to promote SEIS and its benefits at the forthcoming conference: *Impact assessment in the digital era*, scheduled for April 2015.



For more information, please see Meetings section at the ENPI-SEIS website: <http://enpi-seis.ew.eea.europa.eu>

Recent advancements in the East Region



A synthesis report summarizing the approaches and lessons learned in implementing SEIS in the countries of the ENP East region is planned to be produced in the autumn 2014

The benefits of National SEIS workshops

Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Belarus, Moldova and Azerbaijan reaffirmed their commitments for the implementation of SEIS at national level during the conducted workshops in the period November 2013 - May 2014. The production and data on the identified environmental indicators in the areas of air and climate change, surface water quality, municipal waste and biodiversity were in focus during these workshops jointly organized with the Ministries of Environment and national statistical agencies. Moreover, approaches for improving inter-institutional coordination and division of responsibilities were also in the center of the discussions. As an outcome, partner countries agreed to formalize the cooperation with EEA by signing the Letters of Intent and/or statements of these workshops. Such documents are already signed by Georgia, Belarus, Armenia and in negotiation with Moldova and Azerbaijan. Following the national workshops, in **Ukraine** it was decided to set-up a national high-level, inter-agency SEIS coordinating body to empower inter-institutional dialogue. In **Georgia**, the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mrs Khatuna Gogoladze, signed a decree for the establishment of the Environmental Information and Education Centre (EIEC) - a key development to enable public access to and sharing of environmental information. **Armenia** has officially appointed a “data reporter” for the EEA – an essential step to enable data sharing with the EEA. This goes in line with developing a centralized system for data/indicator access managed by the National Statistics Service. **Belarus** has strengthened the access to environmental information and data through the Main Information and Analytical Centre of the National Environmental Monitoring System (NEMS), which is seen as a hub in implementing SEIS at national level. **Moldova** made progress towards developing the Open Data Portal under the e-governance initiative, which is in line with the EU approximation policy. In **Azerbaijan**, the division of responsibilities between the State Statistical Committee and the Ministry of Environment is such that the first publishes some of the selected core set of indicators online, while the Ministry is still in process of establishing such a service for the other indicators.

Water quality data for WISE SoE

Moldova, Georgia, Belarus and Armenia demonstrated concrete steps in aligning their national water monitoring systems with the Water Information System for Europe “State of the Environment” (WISE SoE) tools and methodologies. Their pilot results were presented at a regional workshop organised jointly with the UNECE on the 13 May 2014 in Geneva. Today, 39 countries part of the European environment information and observation network (Eionet) share water quality data every year based on the WISE SoE procedure through the Eionet Priority Data Flows. The exercise with the ENP East volunteering countries aimed at sharing good Eionet practices in establishing national water information systems in the fields of surface water protection.



Way forward to development of waste indicators

The conclusions of the recently published report on “How existing municipal solid waste data in ENPI-East countries can be used for the development of waste indicators” points to the difficulties in producing a reliable indicator on municipal solid waste (MSW) generation. The main reasons for this are missing data based on weighted amounts and uncertainties about the collection coverage of MSW. The report provides country-level summaries and recommendations in addition to a comparison between the countries. It was prepared by the European Topic Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the framework of the ENPI-SEIS project and full version can be downloaded at the ENPI-SEIS website under the news section.



IT experts reflecting on facilitating data and information access

There are several examples of on-line systems to access indicators in the ENP East countries, but limited access to detailed background information supporting the information is available online – was the overall conclusion from the IT Working Group for the East, held at the EEA on 22-23 May 2014. Links with references to data sources and methodology, data validation, policy targets, international agreements and metadata were the indicative support documentation requested from EEA by IT experts from Ministries of Environment and statistical agencies. According to the participants, the overview of international data flows and data sharing procedures for each country are not trivial and such information systems would be useful. Other points of interest included the use of EEA’s State of the Environment Reporting Information System (SERIS), the General Multilingual Environmental Thesaurus (GEMET), and the mandate and role of the IT Working Group itself.



Activities carried out in the South Region

The EEA will try to respond to the identified needs in the coming period and integrate their implementation in the work plan of activities to be carried out together with UNEP MAP

Infrastructure technical assistance missions

The EEA in close dialogue with Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Palestine, Israel, Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan have developed the terms of references for the technical assistance missions to boost infrastructure capacities in the ENP South region. The potential scope of technical assistance was discussed and agreed individually with each country. **Algeria** asked for capacity building on Geographic Information System (GIS) and dedicated trainings on methodologies to determine Sustainable Development Indicators, quality control of data, metadata and convergence of databases. **Morocco** requested support in designing national environmental information system for reporting and for the State of Environment (SoE) assessment. **Tunisia** probed for expert mission to analyse the current air quality monitoring system and define an action plan to improve information sharing and dissemination. In addition, trainings on web services and geo-portal, data exchange and web technologies were identified as crucial. **Palestine** required support for building national, Reportnet like data sharing system and developing action plan to implement national environmental information system. Moreover, trainings on GIS were stressed as beneficial. **Egypt** expressed wish to improve capacities in monitoring, collection, storage, assessment, and reporting of environmental data. Further, assistance in information flow management among stakeholder organizations was pointed as valuable. **Lebanon** inquired about assistance in developing a national stakeholders' network. **Jordan** solicited trainings on Reportnet and GIS. **Israel** asked for a mentoring of technological needs.

Water accounts road-maps for the South

Hands-on technical assistance workshop was organized for water experts to get familiar with the compilation and institutionalisation of water accounts and statistics using the UNSD draft compilation guidelines. At the workshop, taking place in Vienna on 1-3 April 2014, the ENP South partner countries also discussed the initial development of environmental accounting framework. Special attention was paid to the road-maps for the implementation of water accounts, elaborated at national level; especially acknowledging the different level of development of the accounts in the South region. The meeting allowed to further refining countries' road-maps towards the institutionalisation of water accounts and statistics, putting emphasis on the partners' involved and sharing of responsibilities. Improved water statistics datasets and pilots accounts are planned to be published by countries in the coming months.



SWEEP-NET annual forum in Amman

Experts on waste called for strengthening the coordination structures and maintenance of national integrated environmental information system. This is important in view of producing regular, reliable, comparable and timely statistical data and information to support policy making processes. During a two-day regional workshop in Amman, Jordan on 12-13 May 2014, waste experts from ENP South countries presented and exchanged specific data problems encountered in producing indicators for Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) generation and treatment. The estimation of the amount of waste not covered by collection schemes and the definition of MSW appeared as a shared issue. Experts expressed large interest in indicators on MSW which not only covered generation and treatment but also included economic factors and environmental impacts of solid waste management.

The workshop was organized as a side event to the SWEEP-NET annual forum with various solid waste stakeholders attending. This provided the opportunity to address the monitoring, information, data and reporting needs in the waste sector. Since Israel did not take part in this regional workshop, a dedicated ENPI-SEIS Study Tour on Environmental Integrated Assessment on waste was organized for Israeli experts on 23-25 June 2014 to the Austrian Environment Agency - Umweltbundesamt in Vienna, Austria. The study tour focused on EU waste management practices, covering also technological infrastructure and electronic data management system.

SWEEP-Net has successfully held its 4th Regional Forum on Integrated Waste Management entitled: "MOVING UPSTREAM: Waste and Resource Management with Social and Economic Benefits" on the 13-15 May 2014 Amman – Jordan.



The increased collaboration for further SEIS implementation in the ENP region – InSEIS project



InSEIS Project website:
<http://pbe.eionet.europa.eu/inseis>

The EEA in cooperation with Eionet will share its expertise and build capacity of national experts from Jordan, Israel, Morocco, Palestine and Moldova during the next following 14 months. Recently started, the InSEIS project will aim at improving environmental data management, sharing and dissemination of information at national level as part of an advanced National Environmental Information System.

The enhanced cooperation with interested ENP partner countries will primarily focus on provision of Technical Assistance, a dedicated expert support to the countries, using the EEA/Eionet expertise in identified specific activities with the aim to share experiences and build new capacities. Specific thematic workshops will be organised to support the development of technical capacities around particular topics of interest and discussing possibilities for implementation of activities at national and/or regional level. The experts from the above-listed five countries will participate at training missions and dedicated seminar to boost the knowledge and exchange expertise in topics of national interest.

The duration of the project is from 1 June 2014 to 31 July 2015 and its financing is provided through a grant contract managed by the European Commission, Directorate General EuropeAid.

Currently, the EEA is finalising the selection of the countries, interested in the service provision. As next step, the EEA will develop concrete action plan for each country to be sealed at the ENPI-SEIS project Steering committee. First training missions are foreseen to start in the autumn of 2014.

Upcoming Events

Below is an overview of the workshops and meetings that will be held until December 2014 with relevance to the ENPI-SEIS project implementation (exact dates and venues for some of them are still to be confirmed):

4th ENPI- SEIS South enlarged IT Working Group	26-27 August, Copenhagen
Official launch of UfM water knowledge hub during EMWIS Annual Meeting	9-10 September, Valencia
5th ENPI- SEIS Steering Committee Meeting	16-17 September, Copenhagen
Visit of AQG Experts to EEA	26 September, Copenhagen
Twentieth Session of the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy CEP	28-31 October, Geneva
Study Tour for Georgian Experts at EEA	3-4 November, Copenhagen
9th UNECE Joint Task Force on data validation	3-5 November, Geneva
Fourteenth session of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment - WGEMA	6-7 November, Geneva
H2020 Review and Monitoring subgroup meeting	November, Athens (tbc)
2nd Mediterranean Water Forum	24-26 November, Murcia (Spain)
Horizon 2020 Steering Group meeting	December, Athens (tbc)

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The project is funded by the European Union