

Winter 2015

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## ENPI-SEIS East Synthesis Report published

The institutional basis for cooperation in the field of environmental information has gained strength and the process of developing environmental indicators has advanced in the six countries of the Eastern Partnership during the last few years, according to a recently published analysis.

The synthesis report "[Building a Shared Environmental Information System with the Eastern Neighbourhood: Outcome of cooperation, 2010–2014](#)" (available in English and Russian) was developed together with the appointed representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine and financed by the ENPI-SEIS project.

The report is a comprehensive overview of important advancements made in all countries in building the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) throughout the implementation of the project. It demonstrates significant improvements in putting in place national coordination structures, mobilizing capacities to produce environmental indicators and upgrading the information systems for better reporting and easier sharing of environmental data.

The findings of the report also indicate that additional support is needed to establish inter-institutional entities with clear mandates and responsibilities to oversee and coordinate national SEIS development. Further, additional efforts are required for the harmonization of data formats and interoperability of methodologies – prerequisites for better comparison and sharing. Moreover, it is recommended to establish a unified environmental information system and to allocate financial resources to improve national monitoring infrastructure.

This cooperation was built on longer EU engagement with the partners in the Eastern Neighbourhood region in the process of the gradual extension of SEIS to a wider, pan-European area. The implementation of the project has provided necessary tools to support the 'Environment for Europe' process. One of the recommendations of the report urges countries to strengthen the capacity of national administrations to produce regular, policy-relevant and indicator-based state of the environment reports (SOERs), in line with internationally agreed guidelines / methodologies. So far, the use of indicators in environmental reports remains limited, and the produced SOERs often follow a descriptive style, rather than an analytical one, according to the findings of the report.



## 5<sup>th</sup> ENPI-SEIS Steering Committee meeting

Discussing the advancements of the cooperation, activities to carry out during the remaining 6 months of the ENPI-SEIS project and priorities post-2015 was at the core during the two-day Steering Committee meeting, held in Copenhagen 16-17 September 2014.

Countries from both East and South regions and representatives from the European Commission and partner organisations took stock of the results achieved since the previous Steering committee in September 2013. The conducted national workshops and initiated process on gaining commitment from national authorities; organised regional capacity building activities on waste and Water Information System for Europe (WISE); progress made in the on-line access to data on indicators as compared to the situation documented in the 2012 – were the success stories featured for the East region.

As for the South region - the highlights were the recognition of the H2020 reporting process as a tool to reinforce the cooperation among stakeholders in support to the efforts in de-polluting the Mediterranean. While the activities carried out within the South IT Working Group were recognised as a good platform for sharing experience on data and indicators development, further efforts in building a national information system would be needed to ensure continuity of the process. In addition, the need to expand the thematic scope beyond the existing six indicators was stressed to improve the information and analysis of trends in the region.

Touching upon the priority areas for the activities during the remaining duration of the project, the partner countries from both regions didn't come empty-handed to the meeting. The East region has asked for technical trainings and capacity building activities in the area of data management and data sharing; a dedicated workshop on waste statistics and including Georgian, Armenian and Azeri languages in the General Multilingual Environmental Thesaurus (GEMET). The countries from the South region have emphasised three particular elements: organising capacity building exercises on methodology of producing indicators on Industrial emissions; ensuring translation of the H2020 report into Arabic language to cover larger usage at national level and engaging countries in the preparation of the H2020 Phase II work programme.

In conclusion, the Steering Committee participants were informed about the ongoing dialogue between the EEA and the European Commission (EC) services on the future process and opportunities to continue the established cooperation with the two ENP regions. The formalisation of this dialogue is expected to be finalised in spring 2015.



*For more information, please see the [meetings section](#) on the ENPI-SEIS website where you can find agenda, minutes and presentations of the Steering Committee and more ENP-SEIS meetings.*

## Cooperation with key partners

### The EEA and UNECE Directors' meeting



To take stock of the long-lasting cooperation between UNECE and EEA was the purpose of the high-level meeting between Hans Bruyninckx, EEA Executive Director and Christian Friis Bach, UNECE Executive Secretary held on 15 December 2014, Copenhagen.

The discussion touched upon the strategic cooperation and drew parallels between key processes in the two organizations. Aiming for a more efficient resource implementation and convergence – was a common understanding on the approach for the future cooperation. This was particularly relevant for the joint endeavour on sharing environmental data and information, endorsed at the Environment for Europe Ministerial in Astana in 2011. As concrete tasks to follow-up on the given commitment were mentioned the production of the European State of Environment Report 2015, the preparation for the upcoming pan-European Ministerial in Batumi in 2016 and the process towards the next GEO report (GEO-6).

During the meeting the process of measuring progress and advancements in building SEIS across the pan-European region was of particular attention in view of the outcomes of the recent meetings of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators (JTFEI), Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessments (WGEMA) and the recently established Working Group 'Friends of SEIS'.

### Measuring progresses in indicator production process

An assessment of indicator production in the six partner countries of the ENPI-SEIS project is published. The eight core indicators published on the national webpages were screened according to data structure, data format and the availability of time series achieved. Noticeable progress on this was made in the period between May and November 2014, both in terms of indicators' production and sharing online.

The state-of-play is available in the publication 'Progress on the production and sharing of the core environmental indicators by countries of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia'.

This publication, resulting from a series of meetings organised jointly with UNECE Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators in 2013-2014, has been financially supported by EU. EEA has provided financial assistance for the analysis of the six ENP East countries under ENPI-SEIS project, while the West Balkan countries have been supported under different mechanism (IPA).

Further information and the publication available online at: <http://enpi-seis.pbe.eea.europa.eu/data-and-indicators/enpi-east-production-and-sharing-core-set-indicators>

## Regional workshop on green growth

In an effort to demonstrate the value of SEIS in advancing the Green growth and green economy (GE/GG), OECD, UNECE, UNEP and EEA were joining forces during the workshop in Paris 10-11 March. Various national networks representing environment, statistics and economy were discussing and agreeing on the way forward in implementing the 'Greening economies in the Eastern neighbourhood' project funded by the EU. The project, in line with SEIS principles and with consideration of the current SDGs debate, will run until later next year and serve also as a bridge in keeping SEIS and GE/GG topic high on the agenda at both national and regional level.

For more information: <http://www.oecd.org/env/outreach/eapgreen.htm>

## UNEP/MAP and EEA – a balanced partnership

In view of the operationalization of the SEIS principles and the implementation of the second phase of H2020 programme of work, the collaboration between EEA and UNEP/MAP will be further reinforced over the period 2015-2020 through a balanced partnership.

To agree on areas of common interest and increase the effectiveness of the future cooperation, was the purpose of the high-level meeting between EEA Executive Director Mr Hans Bruyninckx and the new UNEP/MAP coordinator Mr Gaetano Leone, held on 22 November 2014 at the EEA premises.

The discussion touched upon the orientation and priority areas of work to ensure better streamlining of the Mediterranean knowledge base, and assess progress towards the depollution of the Mediterranean Sea.

The meeting also addressed the need of more efficient use of resources to maximise the benefits for the two organisations and bringing added value to the regional and national activities. The exchanges also covered the activities linked to the EU MFSD and MAP ECAP-MEDPOL policy agendas, review of MFSD, environmental indicators, water regional platform, revision of NAPs, etc.

Within this perspective, a new joint EEA-UNEP/MAP work plan, covering key areas of common interest was agreed to be developed in the coming period.

## Union for Mediterranean (UfM) and EEA effort in developing the water platform

Creating the Water Knowledge platform in the Mediterranean is a stepping-stone for the cooperation between the EEA and UfM, as it was agreed at Directors' level bilateral exchange during the UfM Ministerial conference in May 2014.

The 2015 year will kick-off the joint programming process to support (labelling) the regional project: 'Creating shared national water data management systems towards a Mediterranean water knowledge platform'.



## H2020 future outlook

Ability to build-up a full assessment on the state of the Mediterranean Sea backboned with quality data and strong countries ownership of the review process are the two main challenges for the second phase of the H2020 Initiative, concluding the H2020 Steering group meeting, held in Barcelona, on 17 December 2014.

To remedy with these challenges, the newly approved work programme for the second phase of the H2020 Monitoring and Review component (2015-2020) puts forward concrete solutions. Firstly, strengthening the production line to ensure appropriate prioritisation and mainstreaming of all assessments of the current thematic scope of H2020. Furthermore, supporting sustainable investments, enhancement of country capacity on science-policy interface and use of assessments to take effective measures and monitor their implementation.

The work programme was developed by the two co-chair organisation of the component, EEA and UNEP/MAP, and reflects the findings of the Horizon 2020 Mediterranean report – Toward shared environmental information systems.

The Review and Monitoring component will meet on 15-16 June 2015 to further develop and operationalise the proposed work programme for the second period of work. This will be done closely linked to the update of the National Actions Plans (NAPs). The activities of the Review and Monitoring component will be supported by the project jointly implemented by EEA and UNEP/MAP.



## Review of the European neighbourhood policy

The aim of the recently published by European Commission Joint Consultation Paper "**Towards a new European neighbourhood policy**" (4 March 2015) is to review the assumptions on which the policy is based, and how instruments should be used to better contribute to this cooperation. The document has the purpose to explore whether the already existing 'special relationship' is reaching its full potential. It will also frame a policy debate on the future direction of the ENP. This consultation will involve both partners in the neighbouring countries and stakeholders across the EU as well as key international organisations active in the neighbourhood. Interested members of the public will also have an opportunity to submit written contributions. The consultation on this document is foreseen until 30 June 2015.

The text of the joint consultation paper can be found under this link: <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/consultation/consultation.pdf>



## Activities carried out in the East and South Region



For more information consult the report on the [EEA website](#).

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*The general multilingual environmental thesaurus (GEMET) was developed for the EEA by the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR) and Umwelt-Bundesamt (UBA), as a reference indexing and retrieval tool for the EEA catalogue of data sources and other EEA databases.*

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### The European environment-state and outlook 2015 report is published

The latest edition of the EEA flagship product: the European environment — state and outlook 2015 report (SOER 2015) provides a comprehensive assessment of the European environment's state, trends and prospects, and places it in a global context. It analyses the opportunities to modify existing policies in order to achieve the European Union's 2050 vision of living well within the limits of the planet.

For the first time the report contains regional assessments, covering the Arctic, Black Sea and Mediterranean - regions identified in the 7th Environmental Action Programme of the European Union as priority areas for the next decade. Their environmental status and related ecosystems need to be closely monitored and assessed over the coming period.

The Mediterranean regional assessments was developed based on the H2020 assessment and evaluation of the marine eco-system.

The ENPI-SEIS project will support the translation of the SOER2015 synthesis report in Russian and Arabic for broader dissemination and potential contribution to regional assessments in a wider context.

### EEA General Multilingual Environmental Thesaurus (GEMET) to the ENP regions

Almost 5300 terms of the most frequently referenced vocabulary for the field of the environment in the world were translated into three more languages of the Eastern Partner countries (Armenian, Azerbaijani and Georgian). GEMET, managed by the EEA, includes all national languages of Eionet countries, together with Russian, Ukrainian and Arabic.

The translation work, financially supported by the ENPI-SEIS project, was coordinated by EEA together with the National Focal Points and Zoï environment network.

For the ENP South region, the cooperation with CEDARE was continued in order to include the full translation of all definitions into Arabic.

More information on GEMET and different language versions at: <http://www.eionet.europa.eu/gemet>

## Calendar of the planned activities under the InSEIS project

Country	Activity	Dates	Partners
The Republic of Moldova	Feasibility study tour and trainings	11-13/11/14 Chisinau	Eionet network with representatives from the Environment Protection Agencies of Austria, Estonia, Bulgaria and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
	Dedicated training sessions: 1) establishment of the common information system; 2) production of national SOER; 3) establishment of the Environment Protection Agency	04/05/15 Chisinau	
Jordan	Technical assistance on the development of a waste management information system	26-28/01/15 Amman	Eionet National Reference Centre on waste and the Environment Agency of Austria
Palestine	Workshop on indicator production for SoE reporting and development of national environmental information system	16-20/02/15 Vienna	The Environment Agency of Austria
Morocco	Technical assistance on climate change vulnerability indicators	11-13/03/15	The Environment Agency of Austria and the Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy of France
	Technical assistance on environmental accounting	23-28/03/15	The Environment Agency of Austria and the Ministry of Environment of Germany
Israel	Workshop on Climate change adaptation indicators	24-26/03/15	The Environment Agency of Austria

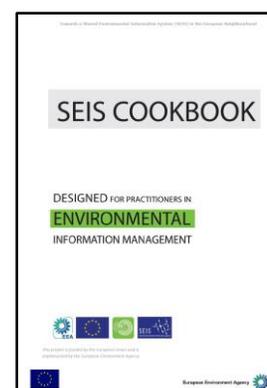


## New cases in the SEIS Cookbook

The “SEIS cookbook” published in 2013 was developed as a living document going hand-to-hand with new developments and illustrating new advancements. Three new cases derived from the ENPI-SEIS cooperation in 2014 have been added in an updated version. These cases describe the management of environmental statistics in Belarus, setting-up a new data management system for the Lake Sevan in Armenia and developing environmental information system in the districts in Morocco.

The SEIS cookbook is available at:

<http://enpi-seis.ew.eea.europa.eu/seis-infrastructure/seis-cookbook>



## Infrastructure missions for the South region

Following the information published in the previous issue of the ENPI-SEIS Newsletter on the Infrastructure missions in ENP South partner countries, EEA with the support of UNEP/MAP have held five missions and one remote action as outlined in the table below.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Technical Assistance subject covered</i>	<i>Dates of the missions</i>
Algeria	Introductory training on environmental database design with focus on media pollution	11-13 November 2014
Egypt	Introductory training on environmental database design including QA/QC mechanisms with focus on application for data analysis	4-6 November 2014
Israel	Design and development of government to business information systems on the basis of the European experiences	Remote tutoring
Jordan	H2020 reporting through ReportNet, GIS for environmental data analysis and communication	23-25 September 2014
Morocco	Expert advice and support on development of regional environmental information systems	17-19 November 2014
Palestine	Installation and running a web GIS system	The mission was postponed to a later stage due to unavailability of a web server supporting a web GIS server software platform and to a limited interest by the country to use a cloud web GIS application.
Tunisia	Tools and methods for communication on air quality	1-3 December 2014

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*The organisation and implementation of the technical support actions provided the opportunity to bring forward the dialogue with the ENP South partner countries on the development of relevant infrastructure in support of SEIS implementation and to better contextualise identified country-specific needs. The outcome of the conducted missions allowed partner institutions to move forward in the respective domain of support, outlining elements for further needs to be covered in future national SEIS roadmaps*

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## Study tour at the EEA for Georgian experts

Experts from the Environmental and Education Centre in the Republic of Georgia have ascertained the European longstanding expertise in managing the environmental information during the two-day visit to EEA on 3-4 November 2014. This study tour was organised by the EEA in response to the commitment given to the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection (MENRP) of Georgia, and financed through the ENPI-SEIS project. The study tour aimed at sharing the best practices and providing a set of tools for potential uptake by the established Centre. The programme of this visit was structured around the communication activities, reporting chain and data flow management.

To assess the advancements made since the visit in November 2014, both parties agreed to hold a follow up meeting combined with a hands-on training on the production of the national state of the environment report (SOER) in 24-26 February 2015 in Tbilisi.

The focus of the training was to guide national thematic experts in the understanding of the production steps of a modern SOER and use of indicators to prepare a sound assessment.



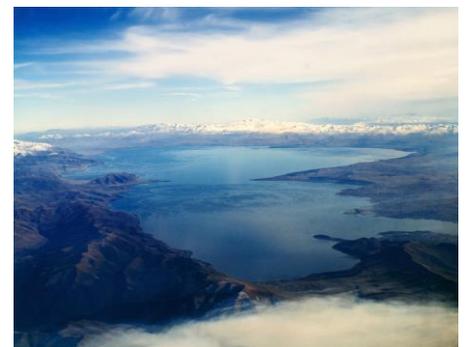
## Lake Sevan: the pride of Armenia

The development of a sustainable and regular data exchange information system for the Lake Sevan, often referred as an environmental heritage and pride of the country, – is a concrete step towards the implementation of SEIS in Armenia. The implementation of this pilot project aims at enhancing the decision-making capabilities and empowering the dialogue among different data holders to better manage the lake's resources.

The scoping meeting to agree on technical development for the data management and on-line indicators system took place in Yerevan, on 3 December 2014. The production and dissemination of 16 water-related indicators will be ensured through a dedicated web portal under the supervision of the National Statistics Service. The concrete tasks covered under this pilot include the development of methods for the visualisation of selected indicators (e.g. aggregation methods, spatial references, classifications). Moreover, it is expected to develop technical specifications for a map viewer to disseminate selected indicators based on the availability of spatial data and existing geo-coding in tabular datasets and statistics.

The development of the pilot project should, in turn, support the implementation of the Resolution No. 947-N "On Approving the Procedures for the Establishment of an Electronic Database, Information Collection, Registration, Processing and Provision based on the Monitoring Data in Lake Sevan and its Watersheds", adopted by the Government of Armenia on September 4, 2014.

The work was carried out jointly with the European Topic Centre on Inland, Coastal and Marine waters (ETC/ICM) and Zoi Environment Network. Main results and activities undertaken within the Lake Sevan SEIS pilot have been captured in a leaflet available in Armenian and English. All background documents and the SEIS Lake Sevan portal is available at: <http://enpi-seis.pbe.eea.europa.eu/east/armenia/pilot-project-seis-lake-sevan>



## Events calendar

<b>Study Tour for Georgian Experts at EEA</b>	3-4 November 2014, Copenhagen
<b>9<sup>th</sup> UNECE Joint Task Force on data validation</b>	3-5 November 2014, Geneva
<b>Fourteenth session of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment - WGEMA</b>	6-7 November 2014, Geneva
<b>Coordination meeting EEA-UNEP/MAP</b>	11 November 2014, Athens
<b>H2020 Review and Monitoring subgroup meeting</b>	12 November 2014, Athens
<b>Horizon 2020 Steering Group meeting</b>	17 November 2014, Brussels
<b>2nd Mediterranean Water Forum</b>	24-26 November 2014 , Murcia
<b>Visit of UNEP/MAP Coordinator Mr Gaetano Leone to the EEA</b>	21 November 2014, Copenhagen
<b>Regional technical workshop for Monitoring climate variability and change in coastal zones</b>	20-21 November 2014, Sophia Antipolis
<b>Visit of UNECE Executive Secretary Mr Christian Friis Bach to EEA</b>	15 December 2014 , Copenhagen
<b>Meeting of MED POL focal points</b>	18-19 December 2014, Barcelona
<b>Conference on the Review of the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD)</b>	17-18 February 2015, Valletta
<b>Follow-up visit and training on SOER production</b>	24-26 February 2015, Tbilisi
<b>Regional workshop for the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia</b>	10-11 March 2015, Paris



*The project is funded by the European Union*

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