

# ENPI-SEIS East Workplan 2013-14

Draft document for consultation - December 2012

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**Overall aims:**

- Make possible a regular reporting process and make progress towards sharing common environmental information;
- Build on the work and recommendations of the IT Working Group and UNECE Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators to produce common environmental indicators for national and regional environmental assessments;
- Develop and implement a workplan focusing on the essential building blocks of a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS).

The 2013-14 workplan is developed and described around seven (7) areas of work:

- 1) the establishment of **data flows** (sharing/access to common datasets underpinning environmental indicators);
- 2) the production of **common environmental indicators** across the ENPI-SEIS East region;
- 3) further development and **use of common methodologies** for the production and calculation of statistical data underpinning environmental indicators (focus on thematic areas of waste, water and air);
- 4) **country-level support** towards advancing SEIS Principles;
- 5) defining and developing approaches for the production of **environmental assessments**;
- 6) **communication** (*subject of separate document*)
- 7) advancing national and regional environmental **networking structures**.

## **AREA 1 – DATA FLOWS**

**Aim:** Set-up and develop the necessary infrastructure, methodologies and routines to enable the sharing of common national datasets with the international community;

**Status: Area 1 – data flows**

- A Working Group on Information Technology (IT WG) for the ENPI East countries was set up in early 2012 with the aim to provide technical solutions and expertise enabling access to data in common structures and in line with SEIS Principles;
- The IT WG conducted two (2) meetings in 2012 (April & September);
- The IT WG agreed to support the indicator development process by assisting the UNECE Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators in filling in an online questionnaire (survey) for a pilot set of 8 indicators (11 datasets) selected from the UNECE Guidelines (currently including 36 indicators);
- A report with the findings from this survey was produced by Zoi Environment Network, and presented to the IT WG at its second meeting. It was also distributed in Russian and English to the National Focal Points at the November 2012 Steering Committee Meeting, Copenhagen;

- The metadata survey shows that there are two clusters of data; datasets produced to meet international reporting obligations and those produced purely for national purposes;
- The EEA reporting mechanism is known under the name “Reportnet”, and is a system currently used by the Eionet (European Environment Information and Observation Network) member and cooperating countries. The IT WG was given a first introduction to this system (Reportnet) at their first meeting, and the members of the WG agreed to use this tool for reporting.

## **Actions: Area 1 – data flows**

### **1.1 Selection of datasets for pilot data flows**

The proposal builds on the work and recommendations of the IT Working Group by concentrating initial efforts on the **[11] datasets underpinning the production of the [8] pilot indicators subject of the 2012 online questionnaire and feasibility study**. It was recommended by the IT Working Group and the Steering Committee to initiate the process of data reporting and sharing with the datasets subject to international reporting obligations. In the context of the ENPI-SEIS project, these include datasets on **greenhouse gas emissions** (GHG, reported to UNFCCC) and **ozone depleting substances** (ODS, reported to the Montreal Protocol of the Vienna Convention). Data on **emissions of sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>)** and **nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>)** should also be considered in this cluster as countries are gradually increasing their capacities to report regularly to the UNECE Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP).

- It is proposed to consider the data on **ozone depleting substances** to build the first case for establishing/mapping the data flows;
- The necessary guidance and tools to establish data flows for the remaining datasets will develop in step-wise manner (based on success rate and capacity development needs);
- For datasets produced for national purposes, proposed data specifications will be provided by the EEA in written form to enable country-level consultation and agreement.

### **1.2 Guidance documents of data formats, structures and definitions**

For datasets related to international reporting obligations (i.e. GHG and ODS), the structure and definitions are already well established and documented and made available through reporting guidelines by the specific Convention Secretariats. If needed, and as appropriate, the EEA could consider facilitating further clarifications for such datasets by translating into Russian relevant sections with technical specifications and through dialogues with the Convention Secretariats to identify the appropriate actions needed.

- The EEA will liaise with the European Topic Centre on Air Pollution and Climate Change Mitigation (ETC/ACM) and the UNFCCC and Montreal Protocol Secretariats to assure awareness of the ENPI-SEIS project activities, and coordinate appropriate actions needed to facilitate accessibility and sharing of GHG and ODS datasets.

For the datasets which are not subject to international reporting obligations (e.g. **mean concentration of nitrogen dioxide, municipal waste and water quality related datasets**) guidance documents specifying proposed data structures and definitions may be developed and made available in Russian as appropriate. For the case of municipal waste, such guidance documents are to be developed in close collaboration with Eurostat (see section 3.3 below). For other datasets, existing documentation on data requirements and specifications for the production of similar indicators produced by the EEA will prove useful (e.g. as defined in “Waterbase” - the EEA database on the status and quality of Europe's rivers, lakes, groundwater bodies and transitional, coastal and marine waters, and on the quantity of Europe's water resources, collected through the Water Information System for Europe (WISE) data collection process).

- [*water quality in rivers and lakes*] The EEA to liaise with the European Topic Centre on Inland, Coastal and Marine waters (ETC/ICM), and in-house water experts to provide proposal for data structures and definitions, as defined in “Waterbase”;
- [*municipal waste*] The EEA to liaise with Eurostat and Waste Governance ENPI-East Project – see sections 3.1 and 3.3;
- [*air emissions*] The EEA to liaise with European Topic Centre on Air Pollution and Climate Change Mitigation (ETC/ACM), the Air Quality Governance ENPI-East Project and the CLRTAP Secretariat to coordinate actions, as appropriate, to facilitate and advance data reporting to CLRTAP, and on mean concentration of nitrogen dioxide in urban air.

The need for data specifications and definitions will develop through dialogue with the National Focal Points and during meetings in which members of the IT Working Group are present (see section 1.4 below). Such exercises will also prove useful in identifying capacity development needs for the practical implementation of data reporting.

### 1.3 Reporting mechanism

The Steering Committee, in line with the proposal of the IT WG, agreed at its 2012 meeting on the use of EEA reporting tools to initiate the sharing of environmental data. This does not mean in any way that the EEA is to be a final repository for such datasets, but rather that the EEA reporting mechanism and established routines are to be used to advance the establishment of data flows.

- The customization of Reportnet to include the ENPI-SEIS countries will start immediately, which implies a set of tasks for the EEA and each participating country;

- Tasks for the EEA include the creation/update of country folders, the update and/or creation of the relevant reporting obligations, and when appropriate, the creation of data definitions (technical specifications for data flows) to be imported into Reportnet's data dictionary;
- **For the countries, the National Focal Points will be asked to populate the Directory, which means identifying the institutions and persons responsible for managing country folders and their roles in the reporting chain.** Further guidance for the process/tasks will be provided in due time.

The reporting chain is built around reporting obligations, as specified in Reportnet's Reporting Obligation Database. For the sake of this ENPI-SEIS activity which aims to demonstrate data flows, it may be necessary to define reporting obligations around the delivery of agreed datasets.

- The review of the existing reporting obligations for the ENPI-SEIS countries will be one of the first tasks to be undertaken **jointly with the National Focal Points** to ensure that these are updated with the latest and correct information.

As discussed during the Steering Committee meeting, for countries that already have their own system to make available [publish] datasets online, links to these datasets can be loaded in Reportnet. There is therefore a certain level of flexibility in terms of approach for implementing data flows.

#### **1.4 Identifying capacity development needs for implementation of data flows**

The workplan addresses the need to conduct a meeting in March 2013. In order to utilize the already planned events, it is proposed to have a project-specific event in parallel to the First Eye on Earth User Conference taking place in Dublin on 4-6 March 2013. A similar proposal for a technical event is being made for the ENPI-SEIS South countries, although the sessions are aimed at being primarily region-specific. The next Eionet National Focal Point meeting will also take place in Dublin in parallel to the Eye on Earth Conference.

- The EEA will develop and send to the National Focal Points in January 2013 a proposed agenda for a technical workshop in parallel to the Eye on Earth Conference. Two representatives from each country will be invited to this event. Being a technical workshop, the IT WG members are the primary target audience.
- Preparatory work will be expected during the two months prior to this event (January/February) to develop the concrete [capacity development] points to be addressed at this meeting. The aim will be to assess the level of capacity and developments for reporting/sharing agreed datasets using Reportnet. Considerations are being made to also include introductory training in SDMX (see point 3.1).

## 1.5 Addressing data quality/compliance procedures

Countries are responsible for the validation of their data. In data definitions, value limits should be set to make automated consistency checks possible, as a first very simple quality check. If inconsistencies, suspected errors and/or outliers are spotted by the EEA during the processing of data for the purpose of producing **regional** indicators, the appropriate country representative will be notified. The EEA does not, and will not, edit any data values submitted by the countries.

- Possible agenda point during 7<sup>th</sup> UNECE JTF meeting (July 2013) to address this issue as appropriate.

### Milestones: Area 1 – data flows

- March 2013 – Reporting Obligation Database (in Reportnet) reviewed and up-to-date. National Focal Points familiar with EEA reporting tool (Reportnet) and reporting workflow (have populated Directory). Technical workshop to address issues related to the sharing and reporting of agreed datasets.
- July 2013 – meeting of the UNECE Joint Task Force on Indicators – agenda points on ENPI-SEIS Project, see Area 2 below.

## AREA 2 – INDICATOR PRODUCTION

### Aims:

- Build on the UNECE Environmental Indicator guidelines (work of the JTF), and the EEA specifications for the core set of indicators, to produce, and agree on, a set of indicator specifications related to the shared and common datasets listed in Area 1 of this workplan;
- Facilitate and encourage the production of national environmental indicators (using agreed specifications);
- To have all definitions in place, and access to datasets, for the pilot production of regional indicators.

### Status: Area 2 – Indicator Production

- The UNECE Joint Task Force (JTF) on Environmental Indicators was established in 2009;
- The JTF has been reviewing through six sessions (2010 – 2012) 36 indicators described in the 2007 UNECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (<http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2007/ece/ece.belgrade.conf.2007.inf.6.e.pdf>).

- The developments and plans for work on indicators under the ENPI-SEIS project have been subject of a particular agenda point at the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> sessions of the JTF.
- Through agreement between the UNECE and the EEA, UNECE is to engage its consultants in revising these Guidelines, taking into consideration the outcomes and comments made during the JTF sessions, and parallel development in the EEA core set of indicators. This activity is to be completed by the end of April 2013

## **Actions: Area 2 – Indicator Production**

### **2.1 Revision of the UNECE Guidelines**

- The EEA to liaise and coordinate with the UNECE the revision of the indicator guidelines, to be completed by April 2013.

### **2.2 Indicator specifications**

In a stepwise manner, and in conjunction to the datasets addressed in the data flow exercise, indicator specifications will be developed (for the UNECE Environmental Indicators).

- The EEA will develop draft indicator specifications, based on the EEA templates, and taking in consideration the latest information in the UNECE indicator guidelines and findings from the metadata survey conducted in 2012.
- The draft indicator specifications will be shared with the National Focal Points in due time for review.
- This work is intended to start after the first review meeting on data flows (Dublin, March 2013, see point 1.4) with progress assessed in parallel to the UNECE JTF meeting in July 2013 (taking into account country-level indicator developments, see point 2.3 below).

### **2.3 Country-level indicator development**

As the countries are working on identifying and assembling the datasets for the data flow exercise, it is expected that attempts to produce the agreed associated indicators are made.

- Countries are to produce national indicators, as defined in the indicator specifications. The key objective of this exercise is, for each country, to document the process, and identify issues and concerns in their indicator development workflow. The output from this exercise will guide the identification of capacity development needs;
- The EEA to liaise and coordinate with the UNECE JTF how to best assess progress by the ENPI-SEIS East countries (option of 7<sup>th</sup> JTF session, July 2013).

## 2.4 Capacity development for indicator production

- Based on progress assessed in July 2013 (see point 2.3 above), issues and concerns highlighted by the countries may be addressed appropriately, either in the form of direct country-level support, through workshops, and/or with written documentation.
- Capacity development actions would be expected to occur between the 7<sup>th</sup> (July) and 8<sup>th</sup> (November) JTF Sessions.

## 2.5 Processing of data for regional indicator production

- As a building block for regional environmental assessments, the EEA aims to produce regional-level indicators based on the datasets made available through the data flow exercise, and based on the indicator specifications produced and agreed (see point 2.2);
- The EEA, together with National Focal Points, will need to agree on the “reference datasets” to be used for the production of the indicators (e.g. population, GDP and areas for calculations per capita, per GDP and/or per km<sup>2</sup>);
- This phase is envisaged to start at the earliest after the UNECE JTF meeting in July, and will continue as appropriate;

## Milestones: Area 2 – Indicator Production

- Success for the production of common indicators fully depends on having access to harmonized datasets and clear and agreed indicator specifications;
- By July 2013, some common datasets should be accessible and shared, and a first set of indicator specifications developed and agreed;
- The EEA is to report progress on regional-level indicator production at next Steering Committee meeting, September 2013.
- By November 2013 (8<sup>th</sup> JTF Session), the specifications for the pilot indicators are expected to be completed and agreed.

## AREA 3 – DATA/STATISTICS DEVELOPMENT

### Aims:

- Assure synergies with other regional ENPI East projects in thematic areas of waste, air and water;
- Respond to recommendations of IT WG on need to advance the use of standards and common approaches for development of metadata, data structures and exchange formats.



### Status: Area 3 – Data/statistics development

- The IT Working Groups for the East and South regions met for their 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting in Skopje, September 2012. The main objectives of this meeting were to share experiences and good practice examples; identify issues in relation to datasets necessary for selected indicators; and discuss proposed data sharing options;
- The IT Working Groups members agreed that further capacity development in the field of metadata development and exchange formats would be beneficial for their work at the national level, and for the ENPI-SEIS project;
- A workshop on Waste Statistics was organized by the UNECE, jointly with Eurostat and EEA (April 2012) – to exchange knowledge and best practices in order to close gaps in country data and secure comparability and consistency for data flows on waste;
- The *Waste Governance – ENPI East Project* is ongoing (2009 – 2013). Further info at: <http://www.wastegovernance.org/>
- The *Air Quality Governance – ENPI East Project* is ongoing (2011 – 2014). Further info at: <http://www.airgovernance.eu/>

### Actions: Area 3 - Data/statistics development

#### 3.1 Metadata structure and exchange format (SDMX)

- The EEA is currently discussing with Eurostat possible support for capacity building in standardized data sharing, based on Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) structures/methodologies. National Focal Points will be advised as this develops.
- The EEA is also currently discussing with Eurostat waste data statistics and reporting (i.e. data specifications and structures for selected waste related indicators) – with the possibility that capacity development in SDMX may be combined with capacity development in waste statistics. National Focal Points will be advised as this develops.

#### 3.2 Thematic area of water

The findings from the metadata survey/feasibility study to help establish regular data flows for a first set of 8 environmental indicators selected from the UNECE core set (see point 1.1) shows that water-related datasets are subject to national reporting (i.e. no regional or international reporting obligations). As a way to advance the data flow exercise, and work towards common approaches, data structure definitions from the guidelines and templates already available in the Reportnet Data Dictionary for the Water Information System for Europe (WISE) data collection process are to be made available (“Waterbase”, see point 1.2). Waterbase data are primarily used in the production of the EEAs indicator-based factsheets.

- The EEA to liaise with the European Topic Centre on Inland, Coastal and Marine waters (ETC/ICM), and in-house water experts to provide a proposal for data structures and definitions, as defined for WISE;
- National Focal Points will be requested to provide some information needed for the coding and structure of data tables, as in the EEA database “Waterbase” (e.g. hydrological basins, identification of rivers).
- Review and progress on reporting of water-related datasets planned for March 2013 meeting (see point 1.4).

### **3.3 Thematic area of waste**

- EEA will continue dialogue with Eurostat and UNECE to evaluate and consider the possibility of a follow-up workshop on waste statistics. National Focal Points will be advised as this develops;
- EEA will discuss with the Coordinating Unit of the Waste Governance Project the possibility for a joint capacity development activity in waste statistics;
- As mentioned in point 3.1, possibility of combining training in waste statistics and SDMX considered.

### **3.4 Thematic area of air**

- The EEA to engage dialogue the Coordinating Unit of the Air Quality Governance Project, supporting participating countries in improving their respective institutional and legislative frameworks in line with the European standards and implementing multilateral environmental agreements and conventions (i.e. aligning countries with CLRTAP methodologies). The dates and scope of capacity development activities organized through the Air Quality Governance Project remain to be determined – National Focal Points will be advised in due time.

### **Milestones: Area 3 - Data/statistics development**

- March 2013, Dublin – EEA guidance documents for water-related datasets ready and discussed.
- [possible] SDMX training – venue and date to be confirmed;
- Capacity development on waste statistics – to be confirmed upon conclusion of dialogue with Eurostat, UNECE and Waste Governance project;
- Capacity development on air emissions inventories – synergies with Air Quality Governance Project. To be confirmed.

## AREA 4 – COUNTRY-LEVEL SUPPORT TOWARDS ADVANCING SEIS PRINCIPLES

### Aim:

- To follow up on the country reports, and in particular evaluate how country priorities and needs can be best addressed through the ENPI-SEIS project.

### Status: Area 4 – country-level support towards advancing SEIS principles

- The finalized country reports and regional overview are available on the ENPI-SEIS project portal <http://enpi-seis.ew.eea.europa.eu/project-activities/country-report/country-report>

### Actions:

#### 4.1 Follow-up on country reports

Dialogue will be initiated with all National Focal Points of the ENPI-East countries in January/February 2013 to follow-up on the country reports, and in particular evaluate how country priorities and needs can be best addressed through the ENPI-SEIS project. The outcome of this country-level dialogue exercise will lead to revised national plans of actions.

- Response to EEA letter, **written feedback by National Focal Points** to EEA in early 2013;
- Coordination (lead by EEA) for follow-up actions (email and/or telephone conference), early 2013.

## AREA 5 – ASSESSMENT

### Aims:

- Follow up Astana Ministerial Declaration (Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference, Astana, Kazakhstan 21–23 September 2011) calling on the countries to keep the pan-European environment under review by establishing a regular process of environmental assessment and to implement SEIS across the region;

- Provide methodological guidance to engage ENPI-SEIS East countries in discussion on possible assessment structure: guide decision making for ENPI-SEIS project deliverable.

### Status: Area 5 – Assessment

- Preparations are underway by the EEA for the development of the 2015 European State of the Environment Report (SOER 2015);
- The SOER 2015 report will be based on the experience of the European Environment: State and Outlook 2005 and 2010 reports, which included a set of assessments of the environment in EEA member and collaborating countries. These

assessments include: country profiles with information on distinguishing features such as geography, climate, major societal developments and key environmental pressures; assessments of common environmental themes; and national and regional stories

## **Actions: Area 5 - Assessment**

### **5.1 Guidance documents on potential assessment approach**

- It is foreseen that decisions on a possible assessment conducted within the scope of the ENPI-SEIS project are taken at the 2013 Steering Committee meeting.
- In preparation for the 2013 Steering Committee meeting, the EEA will make available guidance documents which will be prepared in 2013 for the production of the 2015 European State of the Environment Report (SOER 2015). Of particular relevance are the methodological guidance documents for the country-level summaries assessing the environmental situation and priorities in each country (to be produced by the countries).
- The EEA will seek synergies with UNEP, providing guidance to all African States for a similar exercise coordinated through the Africa Environmental Information Network.

## **Milestones: Area 5 – Assessment**

- By 2013 Steering Committee meeting (September 2013), necessary documentation available to guide decision making on scope, structure and workplan for ENPI-SEIS deliverable.

## **AREA 6 – COMMUNICATION**

*[Highlights of the 2013 Communication Strategy to be sent to National Focal Points in January 2013]*

## **AREA 7 – NETWORK AND MANAGEMENT**

### **7.1. 2013 Steering Committee Meeting**

The next project Steering Committee meeting is being planned tentatively for the week of 16-20 September 2013.

### **7.2 National networks**

The importance of national networking structures (i.e. inter-institutional cooperation) for the collection, organization, management, re-use, sharing and assessment of environmental and information was reiterated at the 2012 Steering Committee meeting. Several countries have expressed both during the meeting as well as in their country reports the desire for further guidance and support on how such national networks could be set-up. While providing

written feedback to the EEA on this workplan document and national priority issues, we invite the National Focal Points to also comment on the status of national networking structures in order to guide potential actions undertaken through the ENPI-SEIS project in this direction.

As highlighted by the European Commission during the Steering Committee meeting, dialogue between the EU and the ENP countries has started for defining the 3 priority sectors of the 2014-2020 work programme. It is important that the ENPI-SEIS National Focal Points liaise with their governments to strengthen the case to have “the environment” as a priority sector for bilateral aid and to include SEIS as a key action in the national action plans.

### **7.3 Coordination with Partners and other projects**

The EEA will maintain and establish partnerships/cooperation with relevant initiatives and bodies to review and assess coherence between this project and other developments in the region. In addition to the partners and projects already listed herein, a strengthened collaboration with the Black Sea Commission will prove beneficial for promoting SEIS principles in the region, and work towards common approaches for environmental assessments.