

## Day 1 Session 2 Regional Plan of activities WHO input to the discussion on the ENI SEIS II East project

WHO has for long been active in the area of environment and health in the European Region. Since 1989, a European Environment and Health Process (EHP) serves the 53 Member States of the European Region; led by WHO in cooperation with UNECE, the process actively involves stakeholders, including EEA, UNEP, NGOs, youth coalition, etc. A series of ministerial conferences set the EH agenda for Europe and assessed progress; the Sixth Ministerial Conference will take place in Ostrava, the Czech Rep in June 2017.

The technical work on environment and health themes is performed in WHO European Centre for Environment and Health in Bonn (WHO ECEH), which is part of WHO Regional Office for Europe. WHO work focuses on health impacts of environmental factors – from developing the evidence base, methods and tools to assess and quantify health impacts of environmental factors, to supporting public (health) policies to protect human health from environmental risk factors.

In the context of the SEIS ENI II project, WHO represents the perspective of a user of environmental data, information and knowledge; practical application of the SEIS principles is relevant for the assessments, interventions and policy development in other sectors, such as the health sector.

All six countries involved in SEIS ENI II East project are part of the WHO European Region, and WHO ECEH cooperates with all of them. In some countries, like in Georgia, WHO ECEH has been supporting the development of NEHAP (the National Environment and Health Action Plan), which is part of the country obligations under the EU Association Agreement. The inter-sectorial process of NEHAP development is led by the health sector (the National Centre for Disease Control) with active participation of the environmental sector, other sectors and stakeholders.

Air quality features as a topic of interest both, in NEHAP and the ENI SEIS II East project; this has created a supportive and enabling environment for the WHO involvement in the GEO country mission. Building on a common interest at the country level, 'air quality and health' could be considered as a potential case study for cooperation under the ENI SEIS II East project; this could become a show case for working with other sectors which are potential users of environmental data, information, and knowledge, which is generated, gathered and made accessible using the SEIS principles. That would be of relevance for Georgia, but would also generate lessons relevant at the regional level. That includes, for example: identification of relevant partners and stakeholders; establishing or strengthening partnerships and agreement on the respective roles and responsibilities; identification of core capacity building needs, taking into account the perspective of both the environment and health sector; development and pilot testing of capacity building curriculum; evaluation of the feasibility of assessing impacts of air quality on health and identification of critical gaps; contribution to the information and awareness raising campaigns related to the implementation of the ENI SEIS II East project on health aspects of environmental factors.

This would also be an opportunity to strengthen the existing cooperation with other partners involved in the ENI SEIS II East project, namely the UNECE (in particular in relation to CLRTAP, to which WHO ECEH is hosting a Chair of the Task Force on Health) and UNEP. Finally, this could be brought to the attention of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, in a way linking to the joint side event on 'Clean air for life' organized at the EfE Ministerial Conference in Batumi, GEO in 2016.

