

4th Steering Committee meeting of the ENI SEIS II East project

**12 November 2019
European Environment Agency
Copenhagen, Denmark**

BACKGROUND NOTE

This note provides information on the meeting's objectives, structure and focus of the sessions. It also outlines some guiding questions for the countries' interventions.

I. Objectives of the Steering Committee meeting

The project Steering Committee evaluates project results, provides guidance, and is convened on annual basis. The third project Steering Committee took place on 14 November 2018 in Tbilisi, Georgia.

The objectives of the 4th ENI SEIS II East Steering Committee meeting are as follows:

1. To take stock of progress achieved in 2019 and capture relevant developments linked to the key priority areas and governance structure(s) at national level;
2. To identify synergies for joint implementation in the remaining project activities in 2019-2020 with relevant projects, partners and other existing initiatives in the context of the SEIS mandate and objectives of the ENI SEIS II East project;
3. To agree on the actions needed in the upcoming months to ensure sufficient visibility of and communication of the project's results and deliverables at national and regional levels.

II. Meeting structure

The 4th Steering Committee meeting is structured in plenary sessions only. Each session will be co-chaired by representatives of the EEA, the European Commission, and/or the partner countries.

The present meeting is considered to be the last Steering Committee with the same format. It will be followed by a closing event/conference to be held in spring/second quarter of 2020 (precise dates to be announced at a later stage).

The 4th Steering Committee meeting sessions will focus on the following:



Session 1: Opening remarks and context for regional environmental cooperation

- The current landscape and commitments for environmental cooperation in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region.
- The role of the European Environment Agency (EEA) to support the cooperation on SEIS in the Eastern Partnership region and efforts to streamline environmental reporting in view of the next pan-European assessment.
- The latest political developments and priorities of the new European Commission.

Session 2: Deliverables of the ENI SEIS II East project

- Present the status of project implementation and discuss the impact of SEIS cooperation on national and regional activities in EaP region;
- Recognise the progress in aligning to European practices and methodologies in the areas of work addressed by the project, as well as to consider further actions as part of future EU-funded projects and bilateral support;
- ***Delivery reports by the countries*** on project implementation (see point III below for guiding questions). Achievements the past year and the vision, strategies and approaches to:
 - reach the project's expected results;
 - connect the different lines of work and networks to ensure sustainable links between actors, projects and initiatives that impact the successful implementation of SEIS at national level;
 - ensure sufficient visibility of the deliverables and project results.

Session 3: Overview of thematic and communication project activities 2019-2020

This session will have two separate but closely interlinked parts, covering the thematic project activities (potentially before the coffee break) - on one hand, and the visibility and communication of the project - on another, i.e.

- a. Present progress on the areas of air quality, biodiversity, land cover, water and integrated environmental assessments, including:
 - Endorsing the plan of activities, milestones and events for the last period of the project;
 - Ensure the way forward and countries' ownership on the achieved milestones.
- b. Endorse an approach to reach higher visibility of the cooperation – actions, products and events in wrapping up the project:
 - Elaborate and endorse an approach to the project final event/closing conference;
 - Agree on the communication actions with relevant stakeholders at national and regional level.

Session 4: Conclusions and Action List

In conclusion, the meeting will address the future perspectives and sustainability of the project results, as well as elaborate and agree upon an Action List from the Steering Committee meeting.

Time for any other business that the participants would like to raise.

III. Preparation of the country interventions

In order to prepare for the country interventions in Session 2, country representatives are kindly asked to reflect on the following questions, and prepare 1-2 slide(s) per question (preferably in English) in advance of the meeting using the **template provided**. Each country intervention should be maximum 15 minutes followed by maximum 5 minutes for questions and answers.

Please note that the overview of events at national and regional level held in the project framework in 2019 will be summarised by the EEA while setting the scene for this session.

The country interventions will run in alphabetical order, unless another order is agreed beforehand with the Chairs.

1) **Progress towards the expected project results**¹:

Please explain briefly, by giving examples, how aspects of environmental reporting have improved or changed in your country over the past year due to a better understanding and implementation of SEIS? Try to specify key factors that have impacted change (e.g. better coordination, infrastructure developments, improved methodologies, etc).

2) **SEIS in support of a regular assessment process**: Environmental assessments require good traceability of data and information and good analytical capacities to integrate information. Can you give examples of recent cases (or good practice examples) that demonstrate the “integration” of environmental information? Integration can be of sectorial nature (data and information from different sectors), or ways to streamline common tools and approaches for analysis (e.g. use of indicators).

3) **Sustainability and connectivity**: Please provide some reflections on how different lines of work and networks addressed through the ENI SEIS II East project will be sustained in the future and linked to other on-going and new projects and initiatives implemented in your country.

4) **Visibility and communication**: This part of countries’ feedback will be taken in Session 3 under the project’s visibility and communication actions. Please consider reflecting on the appropriate events and actions to reach higher visibility of project’s results at national and regional level. This can be linked to the elaborated national communication plans.

¹ For your consideration, kindly note that the project logframe (attached herewith as Annex) should be used for connecting the key points of your presentation to the project deliverables and expected project results.

Implementation of the Shared Environmental Information System principles and practices in the Eastern Partnership countries - ENI SEIS II East project

Annex 1: Refined Logframe matrix of the project

ENI SEIS II East logframe matrix of the project covering period between 1 February 2016 and 31 July 2020.

	Results chain	Indicators	Baseline (2014)	Current value (2016)	Targets (end of project)	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Overall objective: Impact	<i>Support the further implementation of the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) principles and practices in the six Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine): SEIS in place by 2021 in the six partner countries as endorsed at highest political level.</i>	<i>Improved quality of environmental information in the addressed activity areas by the project contributing towards knowledge-based policy-making and good governance in the field of the environment.</i>	<i>Fragmented initiatives and a lack of governance structure(s) to operationalise SEIS.</i>	<i>Commitments made at political level. At the 8th Environment for Europe Conference (Batumi, 2016), the partner countries committed at a highest level to put in place SEIS by 2021.</i>	<i>All six partner countries operationalised SEIS, with functioning structures/committees at national level on environmental information and governance aspects, and environmental information is available and accessible in line with SEIS principles.</i>	<i>Annual progress reports by the partner countries on progress with SEIS implementation. Independent project evaluation report.</i>	<i>Environmental cooperation is high on the agenda. Stable political situation in the Eastern Partnership region. Partner countries willingness to further develop SEIS at national level and availability of capacities to do this.</i>

Implementation of the Shared Environmental Information System principles and practices in the Eastern Partnership countries - ENI SEIS II East project

	Results chain	Indicators	Baseline (2014)	Current value (2016)	Targets (end of project)	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Specific objective(s): Outcome(s)	<p><i>Environmental policy-making and governance is increasingly based on information and knowledge readily available in line with the SEIS principles.</i></p>	<p><i>Improved production and use of the set of regionally agreed environmental indicators for efficient policy-making.</i></p> <p><i>Improved data sharing with clear protocols for institutional cooperation in terms of data management to enable regular and timely data flows, with a coherent environmental data policy for public access developed, endorsed, and followed.</i></p> <p><i>Improved infrastructure developed and used by the partner countries to make available online environmental indicators, data sets and products at national and regional level.</i></p>	<p><i>Core set of 14 regional environmental indicators available across the six partner countries (March 2015).</i></p> <p><i>Some agreements at national level established between partner organisations</i></p> <p><i>Environmental information stored in decentralised databases, not always readily accessible by interested users/organisations.</i></p>	<p><i>Increased uptake of SEIS as an overarching initiative and synergies identified with various projects/activities at national and regional level.</i></p> <p><i>EEA/Eionet good practices examples identified to be shared with EaP countries for reaching the target.</i></p> <p><i>Further development of national environmental information system identified jointly with relevant national authorities.</i></p>	<p><i>Full set of UNECE regional set of environmental indicators available for all six EaP countries supporting improved environmental policy-making.</i></p> <p><i>Data policy documents developed in line with EU/EEA practices and sustainable inter-institutional cooperation in place at national level in the partner countries.</i></p> <p><i>National data portals available in all the partner countries; sharing of environmental information done in an open and accessible manner, following the SEIS principles.</i></p>	<p><i>Availability of regularly updated environmental indicators online.</i></p> <p><i>Letters of Intent/Memoranda of Understanding between institutions in the partner countries on cooperation and data management.</i></p> <p><i>Independent project evaluation report.</i></p>	<p><i>Countries commitment and ownership of the process of producing and updating environmental indicators.</i></p> <p><i>Political stability and support in inter-institutional cooperation.</i></p> <p><i>Supportive administrative procedures at national level.</i></p>
Outputs: Expected results	<p><i>R1 – Improved implementation regional/international commitments related to environmental reporting in line with EU/EEA best practices</i></p>	<p><i>Number of cases for which methodologies are harmonised in line with EU/EEA best practices for the areas addressed by the project (air, water, biodiversity, land).</i></p>	<p><i>Reporting not fully structured, regulated and sustainable due to the lack of a legal frameworks and regulated monitoring.</i></p>	<p><i>Thematic cases for streamlining reporting building on previous activities and EEA knowledge and expertise identified and developed.</i></p>	<p><i>Improved and documented environmental reporting in the addressed thematic areas.</i></p> <p><i>Well-functioning inter-institutional cooperation enabling the coordination of national activities, mobilisation of resources, and information flows between different partners.</i></p>	<p><i>Annual progress reports on SEIS by the partner countries.</i></p> <p><i>International environmental Convention reports.</i></p> <p><i>Project annual progress reports and its web portal.</i></p>	<p><i>Strong synergies and linkages with experts and networks involved in international reporting/MEAs.</i></p> <p><i>Support from Conventions/MEAs/Secretariats in project activities.</i></p>

Implementation of the Shared Environmental Information System principles and practices in the Eastern Partnership countries - ENI SEIS II East project

	Results chain	Indicators	Baseline (2014)	Current value (2016)	Targets (end of project)	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
	<i>R2 – Improved capacities in the national administrations to manage and use environmental statistics, data and information in support to decision-making in line with EU/EEA best practices</i>	<p><i>Number of national policies and procedures on data management, access, and use.</i></p> <p><i>Number of inter-institutional agreements to operationalise the national integrated environmental information system.</i></p> <p><i>Number of pilot projects.</i></p> <p><i>Number of countries with portals and using on-line reporting practices.</i></p>	<p><i>Lack of inter-institutional entities with clear mandates and responsibilities to oversee and coordinate national SEIS development and synergies between different actors.</i></p> <p><i>Limited legislative and regulatory frameworks for the establishment of data-sharing and information-exchange mechanisms.</i></p>	<p><i>Recognition of the value added of transferring examples from EU/EEA knowledge platforms and infrastructure such as WISE, BISE and Reportnet.</i></p> <p><i>Pilot projects designed around national environmental policy priorities.</i></p>	<p><i>Policies and procedural guidelines developed and adopted by at least 4 partner countries.</i></p> <p><i>At least 5 agreements signed with the EEA for the successful implementation of the project.</i></p> <p><i>Six pilot projects implemented to show benefits of data sharing and integration.</i></p> <p><i>At least 3 countries established supporting IT infrastructure including on-line reporting.</i></p>	<p><i>Annual progress report by the countries on the implementation of national SEIS work plans.</i></p> <p><i>Regular reporting by the appointed SEIS National Assistants on country level developments.</i></p>	<p><i>Political support to environmental cooperation.</i></p> <p><i>Existing national strategies and action plans embedding SEIS objectives.</i></p> <p><i>Functioning governance and coordination structures at national level (e.g. SEIS National Implementation Teams).</i></p>
	<i>R3 – Preparation of regular State and Outlook on the Environment reports (SOER) and indicator-based assessments in line with EU/EEA best practices</i>	<i>Number of SoE chapters and assessments products prepared by the partner countries and shared online.</i>	<i>Different regularity of national State of environment (SoE) report/ assessments produced.</i>	<i>National State of environment (SoE) reports produced in different formats and of a more descriptive nature.</i>	<p><i>Traceability of EEA/Eionet knowledge shared in at least four national SoE reports produced by the partner countries.</i></p> <p><i>Built analytical reporting capacities within governmental bodies and mechanisms in place for regular assessments.</i></p>	<i>State of the Environment reports (SOER) and indicator-based assessments produced by the countries.</i>	<p><i>National resources and capacities to integrate the knowledge shared.</i></p> <p><i>Government commitment.</i></p>

Implementation of the Shared Environmental Information System principles and practices in the Eastern Partnership countries - ENI SEIS II East project

	Results chain	Indicators	Baseline (2014)	Current value (2016)	Targets (end of project)	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Activities	<p><i>Activity 1.1: Support to national capacities to respond to international commitments in priority areas</i></p> <p><i>Activity 1.2: Harmonisation of methodologies for production of comparable environmental indicators</i></p> <p><i>Activity 2.1: Expert assistance and capacity building in development of national environmental information system(s) and supporting infrastructure</i></p> <p><i>Activity 2.2: Fostering inter-institutional dialogue and public participation in the environmental decision-making process</i></p> <p><i>Activity 2.3: Pilot on extending CORINE Land Cover (CLC) methodology to capital areas of the partner countries</i></p> <p><i>Activity 2.4: National pilot projects demonstrating data sharing and integration</i></p> <p><i>Activity 2.5: Expert assistance to enhancements of the environmental legislation</i></p> <p><i>Activity 3.1: National training and expert assistance on SOER production</i></p> <p><i>Activity 3.2: Methodological support for production of indicator-based assessments</i></p> <p><i>Activity 4.1: Development and implementation of project communication and visibility plan at regional and national levels</i></p> <p><i>Activity 4.2: Regular dialogue with Eionet and synergy activities</i></p> <p><i>Activity 5.1: Project management and coordination of cross-cutting issues with relevant partners</i></p> <p><i>Activity 5.2: Overview and reporting of the project administrative and financial execution</i></p> <p><i>Activity 5.3: Interaction(s) with relevant regional expert networks and coordination of project working groups</i></p>		<p>Means:</p> <p><i>Financial resources:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EEA contribution funds - EC project funds - National support for project implementation <p><i>Human resources:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EEA core staff - Project coordinator - Other project contractual staff - Country assistants - Eionet network - National Focal Points provided by the countries 	<p>1.1: Annual reporting of progress by countries on agreed activities; Increased number of datasets to be shared/ delivered by the countries to various conventions/MEAs;</p> <p>1.2: Annual reports demonstrating progress towards delivery of the UNECE set of environmental indicators, subject to data availability; Proceedings/conclusions from the regional and national project events held;</p> <p>2.1: Annual reporting on developments in data policies and inter-institutional agreements between key institutional partners; gradual contributions to EU/EEA data and information platforms and services;</p> <p>2.2: Inter-institutional working groups established at national level; signed MoUs/Letters of Intent with EEA;</p> <p>2.3: Pilots for land cover change mapping for the agreed areas in each of the countries;</p> <p>2.4: Examples of national pilots in a priority area identified by the partners in support of better environmental data sharing and possible cross-thematic integration;</p> <p>2.5: Analysis of relevant environmental data and data access legislation and regulations, particularly on the implementation of the Access to Information Directive/Aarhus Convention;</p> <p>3.1: Guidance documents on the production of SOE reports in line with EEA/Eionet best practices;</p> <p>3.2: National and regional events on SoE production and indicator-based assessments/methodologies;</p> <p>4.1: Regional communication and visibility plan implemented throughout the project;</p> <p>4.2: Regular interaction and involvement of Eionet in the ENI East activities;</p> <p>5.1: Timely execution and efficient project management;</p> <p>5.2: Timely annual progress reporting and updates to EC;</p> <p>5.3: Close synergies maintained with relevant regional activities and initiatives, EU-funded and from other donors.</p>	<p>Progress on activities implementation reported at annual Steering Committee meetings and progress made documented in the project annual progress reports submitted to the EC.</p> <p>Independent project evaluation report.</p>	<p>Successful implementation of project activities is subject to countries commitment and willingness to cooperate with EEA/Eionet experts.</p>	