

The State of Environment / Assessment Reports: state of implementation

Note on the State of Play

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Project manager: Dr. Jana Tafi



Background

The systematic production of assessments and indicators from countries and regions is a clearly acknowledged need at global level. These countries need in particular to produce state of the environment reports according to their obligations under the Aarhus Convention (Article 5.4).

Environmental assessment relates to environmental consequences (positive and negative) of plans, policies, programs, or concrete projects prior to the decision to move forward with the proposed action, and to the comparison of outcomes and results with neighbours and regarding SEIS, within the entire pan-European region.

The ENI SEIS II East project supports the regular production of UNECE environmental indicators and assessments as a basis for good governance in the field of the environment. In a first instance, this will result in improved implementation of countries' international commitments related to environmental reporting and of preparation of regular State of Environment reports and indicator-based assessments in line with EU and EEA best practices. It highlights the need of putting in place a Shared Environmental Information System for streamlining the assessment landscape and building the regular reporting process. The project covers activities in the six Eastern Partnership countries, covering Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. (<http://eni-seis.eionet.europa.eu/east>).

State of Play

The EEA overview of environmental information availability and on line access was carried out in January-February 2017. The overview was focus on checking the UNECE environmental indicators, the national environmental assessments as well as public access through internet sources.

The overview shows particular improvements that help to make the information easily accessible via internet to the community.

Key findings from this review are:

1. All countries produce at least some environmental reports. National state-of-the-environment reports are not published regularly (annually), except in Belarus and Ukraine. The Ministries responsible for the environment are the publishers of most environmental reports but they are often funded with external support.

2. In almost all six eastern countries, specialized Environmental Bulletins are published on a half-yearly, quarterly, monthly, weekly or even daily basis. These bulletins include monitoring data with interpretation without detailed analysis. The Hydro meteorological Services are the publishers of these reports and they are funded by national funding.

3. The application of UNECE environmental indicators is at a final stage in most target countries and certain indicators are being used to report to Conventions and international meetings, but a full indicator-based environmental report has never been prepared in any of the countries. (See box below Figure 1).

Figure 1: National environmental assessments per country

Type of report	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Belarus	Georgia	Moldova	Ukraine
National environmental reports	Yes/Last 2007-2011	No	Yes/Annual	Yes/Last 2001-2013	Yes/Last 2007-2010	Yes/Annual
Subnational environmental reports						Yes
Local environmental reports						Yes
Specialized reports – climate (national communications to UNFCCC)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Specialize reports – air	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Specialized reports – water	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Specialized reports – biodiversity	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Specialized reports – waste	No	No	No	No	No	No
Indicator-based reports	No	No	No	No	No	No
National Statistical Yearbook	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
National Statistical Yearbook on environment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The national assessment processes in Belarus and Ukraine is nationally funded, (e.g. SoE reports). In Belarus a National report on the state of the environment is published annually.

In most of the six eastern countries thematic topics and reports are covered by national communication: UNFCCC, CBD, UNDP, UNECE Conventions and Sustainable Development progress reports. These reports are using environmental indicators, and include monitoring of their achievements as a parts of the assessment process. Existing national Concepts of Transition to Sustainable Development cover environmental and socio-economic aspects. This include monitoring of nationally identify targets. “National Strategy for sustainable development for the period up to 2020 of the Republic of Belarus”, “National Environmental Policy of Ukraine: Assessment and Development Strategy”, “Water Supply and Sanitation Strategy in Republic of Moldova” contain list of national goals and targets to be achieved and monitored.

All six Ministries of Environment have websites, accessible in national languages and with some pages available also in English and Russian. Many national assessment reports are available in national languages or in English. (See Figure 2).

Figure 2. Central environmental web portals

Country	Institution	Portal	Language
Armenia	Ministry of Nature Protection	http://www.mnp.am/	AR, ENG, RU
Armenia	The State Committee of Real Estate Cadastre	http://www.cadastre.am/	AR
Armenia	National Statistical Office	http://armstatbank.am/	AR, ENG, RU
Azerbaijan	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources	http://eco.gov.az/	AZ,ENG
Azerbaijan	The State Statistical Committee	http://www.stat.gov.az/	AZ, ENG
Belarus	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection	http://www.minpriroda.gov.by/ru/	RUS,ENG
Belarus	Belarusian Research Center"Ecology"	http://www.ecoinfo.by/	RUS,ENG
Belarus	National Statistical Committee	http://www.belstat.gov.by/en/	RUS,ENG
Georgia	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources	http://www.moe.gov.ge/	GE
Georgia	National Statistics Office	http://www.geostat.ge/	GE,ENG
Moldova	Ministry of Environment	http://mediu.gov.md/	RO,RU.ENG
Moldova	State Agency MOLSILVA	http://www.moldsilva.gov.md/	RO,RU.ENG
Moldova	State Hydrometeorological Service	http://www.meteo.md/	RO,RU.ENG
Moldova	Institute of Ecology and Geography	http://www.ieg.asm.md/	RO,ENG
Moldova	Climate Change Office	http://clima.md/	RO,ENG
Moldova	National Bureau of Statistics	http://www.statistica.md/	RO,RU.ENG
Ukraine	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources	http://menr.gov.ua/	UA,ENG
Ukraine	State Statistics Service of Ukraine	http://ukrstat.gov.ua/	UA,ENG

Conclusion

Under different legislative settings the ENI countries need to establish their regular national assessments and reporting process in order to provide the necessary information to feed national and regional policy requests. Contributing to the implementation of the ratified Aarhus Convention these countries publish their national State of Environment report (SoE). National Statistical offices are also producing key data for assessments and indicators and disseminate them in e-Data base and/or e-Statistical Yearbook formats in their official websites. In majority these countries have available 'online data' in support to the UNECE commonly agreed environmental indicators, while the assessment component remains limited, irregular or delayed. The inclusion of a dedicated assessment component which linked to the work on indicators is a clear demand from the previous cooperation under the ENPI-SEIS project. The application of indicators, assessments, outlooks, tools and methodologies used by EEA and EEA countries will be promoted and implemented according to their interest on the context of the ENI SEIS II East project.