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## EEA/ENI East procedure

### For assignment of National SEIS Assistants in the Eastern Partnership Countries

The purpose of this paper is to summarise the process of the appointment of the National SEIS Assistants in the Eastern Partnership Countries in support of the implementation of the ENI SEIS II East project over the 2017-2020 period.

#### Background

The Description of the Action for the Grant Agreement No ENI/2014/344-044/ENI East region between EEA and DG NEAR describes the following activity:

Excerpt from the Description of Action:

#### **5.1. Method of implementation and rationale**

*The overall method of implementation of the proposed activity is to use the Eionet as the model for SEIS implementation in the ENP East region. Eionet is structured around national obligations towards the EU and the international community streamlined through a rational reporting process with sustainable and stable reporting network (via national focal points) being mandated to report on behalf of the country, as well as strongly supported by the peer element in the network where countries share experience and learn from each other.*

*A similar model is proposed for the ENI East partner countries in line with the practice under the ENPI-SEIS project, where two NFPs have been nominated by each country, coming from the Ministries of Environment and the National Statistical authority. Establishing links to relevant experts in other line ministries/national organisations for particular thematic area is a step towards setting up coordination structures at national level. In the project set-up this is referred to as the **National Implementation Team (NIT)** (see section 5.4 below). The NIT will be the focus point for implementation as it brings together different thematic areas around a joint task of securing transparent access to environmental information. Provision of capacity building support, addressing national priorities and identified needs, would be done towards the NIT with Eionet expertise (in line with the practice used under the 'InSEIS' project mentioned under section 1.4).*

*In supporting the cooperation with the ENP East partner countries and in continuation of the activities under the ENPI-SEIS project, the EEA will make use of framework contracts, also to attract relevant Eionet partners and appropriate organisations from the ENP East region to utilise their technical expertise in the addressed thematic areas. The project activities could prepare the ground for further support to the ENP partners through TAIEX and twinning actions with the EU countries, and in synergy – possibly joint activities – with other ongoing regional activities.*

*A variety of models will be applied to mobilise experts and provide technical assistance to the countries. This includes: expert visits to the countries; assistance to provide guidance on nationally-driven and/or regional processes (e.g. provision of guidelines, desk studies, and review of*

documents); study tours and working visits to the EEA, Eionet-related entity and/or in relevant national entity in Eionet country; and through dedicated hands-on training. Engagement of key national stakeholders will also be sought through the development and agreement with the countries of national work plans for the period of the project implementation, identifying particular country needs, linked to capacities, priorities, legislative, financial and administrative issues to be tackled (some issues have been identified and listed in the 2013 ROM reports). To that end, support via **dedicated national assistants** is foreseen to ensure continuous engagement of national stakeholders, better operationalisation of daily work, coordination of planned events, and follow-up on the implementation of the agreed activities in the countries. Deployment of the dedicated national assistants through the project shall respond to the expressed country needs to support the national coordination and the nominated NFPs in the development of SEIS and environmental data sharing models at national level. The dedicated assistant will provide full-time or part-time support, depending on country needs.

The dedicated national assistants will have the responsibility to manage and oversee the organisational and administrative procedures related to country-specific requests (i.e. elaborate, communicate requests and follow-up on their implementation). The expert support would be provided based on countries' commitment to the national work plans, which would have to be elaborated and agreed to by the National Implementation Team (in which the NFPs are members).

#### **In practice, the Description of Action provides two options for the Eastern Partnership Countries**

Based on the above, the EEA has consulted partner countries the financing options (via the Ministry or the framework contractor) on recruiting dedicated "National SEIS Assistants" as soon as the National Implementation Team (NIT) in the respective country becomes operational. The countries were consulted at the Steering Committee meeting in Brussels in November 2016 on the preferred recruitment financing option a) either recruited through the respective ministry/governmental institution with EEA contribution towards gross salary of the person through the ministry/governmental institution or b) through our framework contractor ZOI Environmental Networks in the form of a consultancy contract.

##### **a) Procedure for support through national ministry/governmental institution**

The approach would be the same as currently in use in the IPA funded West Balkan Countries. The local NIT organises a selection procedure following the country's local rules and sets up a shortlist of three candidates. EEA will participate in the final interviews (e.g. by Skype) and support the NIT in the final selection, however respecting the NIT's final decision by having a supporting and verifying role. The agreed salary will follow the local average salary rates and payments corresponding to gross salaries will be made by EEA to the national institution's official account on a half-yearly basis. The local institution will manage the person as a staff member with same rights and obligations as any other staff member in the same institution, including rights for annual leave and social security etc. The selected person is to send quarterly reports and approved timesheets to EEA as supporting operational documentation and as pre-requisite for further payments of salary contribution. The quarterly reports will then be used in the EEA regular reporting cycle towards DG NEAR.

##### **b) Procedure through EEA framework contractor ZOI**

The framework contract states "As per Description of the Action (Annex I to the contract) for the cooperation with the East region, support via dedicated national assistants is foreseen to ensure continuous engagement of national stakeholders, better operationalisation of daily work,

coordination of planned events, and follow-up on the implementation of the agreed activities in the countries. Deployment of such dedicated national assistants shall respond to the expressed country needs to support the national coordination and the nominated NFPs in the development of SEIS and environmental data sharing models at national level. The dedicated assistant will provide full-time or part-time support, depending on country needs.”

This option was also the one envisaged in the budget of the Action as a full-time support. Depending on the countries’ commitment and interest to get such a support, full-time or part-time assistance could be provided.

The selection procedure of the National SEIS Assistant will follow the following steps:

- Each interested country and in specific the respective NIT is asked to provide EEA with two CVs of their proposed candidates to become the National SEIS Assistant. ZOI is asked to provide one CV.
- EEA selection panel consisting of the Head of Group and the ENI East Coordinator select one of these three CVs as the most suitable candidate and contact the person for an interview (e.g. by Skype).
- Once the suitable candidate is selected, based on the specific contract mentioned above, ZOI is to provide EEA the agreed tasks to be performed by that person (listed below) either by recruiting her/him as a ZOI staff member or by means of sub-contracting thus taking over full responsibility of the National SEIS Assistant.
- The average salary of the peers of the National SEIS Assistants per each county can be consulted in the Eurostat/ILO/Wikipedia statistics, alternatively salary rates of the EU delegations in the region.

The specific contract with ZOI is to cover

- In the case the National SEIS Assistant is a ZOI staff member: the National SEIS Assistant’s gross salary following the - with EEA agreed - salary grid per country, the employer’s fees e.g. national taxes, social contribution, related insurances and other possible staffing costs.
- In the case of subcontracting: the related company taxes and VAT, insurances and other relevant fees per national legislation are to be covered accordingly.
- Running costs as office rent and space including the furniture, telephone and internet connections, provision of the meeting room and light catering for the regular NIT meetings
- Office equipment needed to perform all the tasks, such as computer, telephone.
- All administrative costs are covered by ZOI

### **Role and tasks of the National SEIS Assistants**

In preparing for putting in place such a person in each one of the Eastern Partnership countries, EEA has developed the below description of the role and tasks of the National SEIS Assistant that was shared with the ENP NFPs for comments.

The role of the National SEIS Assistant is to support the officially appointed National Implementation Team as well as the National Focal Points in all tasks related to the Action “Implementation of the Shared Environmental Information System principles and practices in the Eastern Partnership countries (SEIS East)”, with the implementation period running up to 31.01.2020.

The National SEIS Assistant will assist in building up and updating the work plan for the COUNTRY in co-operation with the EEA.

The National SEIS Assistant will work at the <name of the Country>, and shall perform the following tasks:

1. Provide support and contribute to the development and implementation of activities according to the National Work Plan and the regional plan at the national level together with the officially appointed National Focal Points.
2. Provide support to the officially appointed National Focal Points on the coordination with other members of the National Implementation Team.
3. Assist, organise and take part in (if deemed necessary) training sessions, expert visits/ meetings/seminars/conferences/study tours/pilots and relevant events at national level as identified in the course of the project implementation.
4. Participate in the planning, preparation and implementation of the EEA staff visits to the <name of the Country>.
5. Ensure the delivery of the project's results in accordance with the National Work Plan together with the officially appointed National Focal Points/National Implementation Team towards production of environmental assessments, providing input to regional level, as well as indicator-based reports, indicator fact sheets and relevant briefings on environmental topics.
6. Manage and coordinate related activities that will support the country in data collections, quality assurance and control, indicator developments and assessment products in accordance with the National Work Plan, as well as in synergy with other related ongoing projects and initiatives.
7. Maintain regular dialogue with relevant networks/working groups at national level in support of development of relevant/agreed environmental indicators, data and assessments.
8. Contribute to the project's communication and visibility activities in close cooperation with the civil society, as well as to the regional level activities. Provide regular updates for publication on the project's web site. Deliver communication in the local language to promote the outcomes of the project via different channels.
9. Provide quarterly reporting in English or Russian to the EEA on the progress of the project activities in the country, as well as in the national language for national distribution.
10. Proof read the English text of EEA materials translated into National /Russian languages, and vice versa.
11. Participating in other projects' relevant events and meetings to ensure visibility of the SEIS project and identify possible areas of cooperation

In order to support the country level activities in the most optimal way, it is required that the candidates applying correspond to the following criteria:

- a) Successful completion of university studies attested by a degree relevant to the field concerned (e.g. environmental sciences, sustainability sciences, system sciences, social sciences);
- b) A minimum of 5 years of relevant professional experience after achieving the qualification set out above with appropriate professional experience on environmental assessments and indicators/data; knowledge of the national environmental policies and priorities;

c) Be a national of <name of the Country>, and have a good knowledge of English/Russian and National language(s) of the country