

10th meeting of the Horizon 2020 Review and Monitoring (RM) Group and Assessment workshop

23-24 September 2019, Athens, Greece

Wyndham Grand Athens

SUMMARY OUTCOMES OF THE MEETING

Attached are: Detailed Minutes of the meeting, final Agenda of the Meeting and List of Participants

All presentations made are accessible at: <https://eni-seis.eionet.europa.eu/south/communication/events/project-related-events/10th-meeting-of-the-horizon-2020-review-and-monitoring-group/presentations>

This 10th meeting of the Horizon 2020 Review and Monitoring group took place earlier and separately from the ENI SEIS II South Support Mechanism Steering Committee meeting, to focus on the 2nd Horizon 2020 indicator-based assessment and Review and Monitoring contribution to the preparation of a post 2020 initiative. Co-Chaired by European Environment Agency and UNEP/MAP, the meeting organised around a plenary session (0,5 day) and a workshop-type of session (1,5 days) took stock and reviewed progress achieved with the implementation of the programme of work of the H2020 Review and Monitoring group and in particular assess progress with the production of the Horizon 2020/NAP indicators as well as the preparation of the 2nd Horizon 2020 indicator-based assessment.

The attending Horizon 2020 Review and Monitoring Stakeholders (ENI SEIS II South Focal Points, MEDPOL Focal Points, H2020 Focal Points from Albania, Algeria, Bosnia Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Montenegro, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, Turkey), the European Commission, the Union for the Mediterranean, CEDARE and several other regional NGOs, institutions and projects active in the region) were very engaged in the discussions.

Summary outcomes of the assessment workshop and Review and Monitoring plenary meeting are reflected as follows:

The meeting acknowledged significant steps forward in developing a Mediterranean knowledge base and the critical role of such a Review and Monitoring group to foster the production of environmental information, based on common standards and to deliver both at national and regional level. The importance of appropriate coordination among all NFPs is being recognised as a must to carry out such tasks.

The countries recognized the importance of the ongoing review and monitoring work, and complementarities between various actions (monitoring, producing data and indicators, carrying out, assessments, providing knowledge and ensuring appropriate communication of it), as well as the importance of maintaining the efforts and activities. The excellent governance and coordination established at national (and regional) level has been an important achievement during the second phase of the work. The co-chairs thanked the countries for their strong support.

The meeting highlighted the importance of high level engagement to sustain such system and awareness on the value added of regular production of quality assessed data and indicators.

The RM workshop pointed out and recommended

- Data availability and data access remain an important issue, further support needed,
- To provide visibility to the overall national and regional investment in developing data/information/indicator capacities and underpinning knowledge base,
- NFPs/national SEIS Team to use the available guidance and technical assistance possibilities to further develop thematic analysis and progress with the completion of the indicator assessment factsheets and the overall assessment of progress,
- NFPs/national SEIS teams to make use of exchanges of views/experiences and inputs from this assessment workshop to better address cross-cutting elements and knowledge gaps/limitations in the national analysis,
- Importance to highlight country specific issues. NFPs/national SEIS teams to identify and develop case studies to complement national and regional analyses,
- Urgent for every country to complete the H2020/NAP data collection and share the collected data on InfoMAP platform.

In the concluding session, the co-chairs pointed out the tight timeline and reminded participants of key upcoming milestones (H2020 Steering Group, 21st Conference of the Parties to the Barcelona Convention, the UfM ministerial conferences) and encouraged countries to speed-up their data delivery and the assessment of the NAP/H2020 indicators to feed into the regional assessment. When contributing to finalizing the regional report, the regional team and the RM group will provide high attention to the coherence of messages, through a transparent and traceable process.

The co-chairs reminded that with the support of the ENI SEIS II South Support Mechanism (in this respect, it should be noted that the ENI SEIS project is extended up to July 2020), further technical assistance will be provided to countries. Countries were advised to be very concrete when formulating the kind of technical support needed in the coming months.

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--- MEETING REPORT ---

The meeting was organised around a workshop-type session (1,5 days) and a plenary session (afternoon session on Day 2) to exchange and further elaborate on key outcomes/messages from national and regional assessments.

DAY 1	Monday 23 September, 2019 - Review and Monitoring (RM) workshop on Assessment
Session 1. Setting the scene	
Opening of the Review and Monitoring (RM) workshop on Assessment	

The European Environment Agency (EEA, Cécile Roddier-Quefelec) opened the workshop, welcomed all participants and reminded the participants of the main objective of the workshop: *to take stock and review progress achieved with the implementation of the programme of work of the H2020 Review and Monitoring group and in particular assess the progress with the production of the Horizon 2020/National Action Plan (NAP) indicators and the preparation of the 2nd Horizon 2020 indicator-based assessment.*

UN Environment/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP, Mohamad Kayyal) provided background information on key initiatives under implementation in the Mediterranean region that established regular mechanisms to review and monitor the State of the Mediterranean Environment. He highlighted the role of UNEP/MAP in the preparation of three assessment studies over the period 2016-2021, making special reference to the State of Environment and Development (SoED) report, currently under preparation, and conveying some of its key messages regarding main pollutants affecting the Mediterranean Sea; waste generation and management practices, and increase in plastic consumption and marine litter. He further noted that two key assessment studies have been prepared by UNEP/MAP (MED POL), namely the Report on the Evaluation of 10 existing pollution-related Regional Plans, and SAP-MED mid-term evaluation report.

Throughout the workshop, participants were invited to take part in a number of short online real-time surveys on several topics relevant to the workshop using the Mentimeter tool. Selected outcomes of these interactive surveys are presented throughout the report.

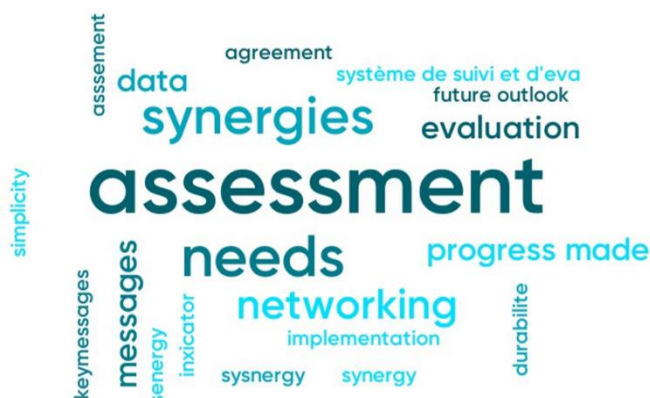


Figure 1 – Results from Mentimeter survey of participants on their expectations for the workshop (42 responses)

Cecile Roddier-Quefelec (EEA) gave an overview presentation highlighting:

- the mandate of the H2020 Review and Monitoring group;
- the purpose of indicator-based assessments to inform policy, and the importance of availability, quality and accessibility of data;
- the indicators covering the three H2020 thematic areas (namely, waste, wastewater and industrial emissions), focusing also on prevention and emerging issues such as marine litter;
- the importance of appropriate national coordination for continuous data production, sharing and production of assessments;
- how to make data useful for policy-makers and how data can be used at national and regional levels to inform current and new policy measures;
- *who's who*: H2020 Focal Points (FPs) – responsible for steering the H2020 process (usually from the Ministry of Environment); ENI SEIS FPs – responsible for the coordination of the national team implementing the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) II South project, including the production of data and information (representatives from both the Ministry of Environment and statistical agencies); MEDPOL Focal Points – mainly working on monitoring of marine pollution and reporting on the Barcelona Convention Protocol on Land-Based Sources ; MAP Ecosystem Approach Correspondence Group (CORMON) – coordinating the national work on implementing Ecosystem Approach (EcAp); Plan Bleu FPs – linking environment and sustainable development; InfoRac FPs – facilitating and supporting information and communication activities;
- the main purpose of the workshop: to work together to harvest knowledge and achieve progress in preparing the H2020 Assessment, including through interactive group discussion to determine key messages and analytical outcomes.

Claudette Spiteri, from the European Topic Centre on Inland, Coastal and Marine Waters (ETC-ICM/Deltares) gave a short presentation on the assessment tools currently being used for the development of the H2020 regional assessment. These include the Monitoring-Data-Indicators-Assessment-Knowledge (MDIAK) framework adapted to the Mediterranean situation, as well as the Drivers-Pressures-State-Impact-Responses (DPSIR) framework as the analytical assessment framework with the H2020/NAP indicator set at its core and the 3 geographical levels (coastal/hydrological basin; national; regional) considered in the assessment.

Michael Assouline from the EEA presented the state of the reporting infrastructure, developed in collaboration with INFO/RAC to support the H2020 data flow and serve the Second Horizon 2020 Indicator-based assessment report, noting that some delays in the reporting process have occurred. The presentation summarized the state of play, ongoing developments and next steps, as follows:

- Most ENI countries have already officially nominated a data reporter except Algeria, Lebanon and Egypt. The ENI SEIS II NFP from Egypt communicated that they will provide nominees by email.
- INFO MAP Regional infrastructure is now operative and was presented via the different modules that compose its architecture. Focus was on how the H2020 data flows will benefit from the different Barcelona Convention reporting activities such as IMAP/MEDPOL, NBB/PRTR, BCRS.
- Efforts are made to develop a Mediterranean Regional Infrastructure that allows multiple dataflow and ensures convergence in reporting between different regions (North and South), facilitates the exchange of data and ensures interoperability among systems.
- The full reporting chain put in place was presented starting from the methodologies developed by the experts, to data dictionaries, design of structured tables (spreadsheets) and distribution of guidance materials via data calls.
- Tools and standards have been improved following countries' feedback and innovative solutions are under development such as prefilling solution (webforms) to substitute external tables (spreadsheets). Webforms represent a sustainable option to reduce reporting redundancy and provide quicker feedback to countries via automatic quality check (QC).
- The H2020 state of play was presented through a dedicated dashboard to visualise quality checked data submissions. So far, only three ENI plus two Balkan countries reported data to INFO MAP following the first data call in December 2018.
- Different solutions of technical assistance were presented to the countries to improve technical capacity in data reporting. Morocco is a good example of interoperability within information systems. Remote technical support represents another possibility. Two webinars have already been organised: one on updating spreadsheets and a second on using Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI). Countries were invited to express their specific needs. Libya asked for capacity building to address data gaps (time series).
- The H2020 data policy, under preparation, was introduced as a key pillar to implement SEIS principles in the region (access, share, use of data, etc.).
- Finally, the audience was invited to visit the project website and explore and download online documentation (guidelines, manuals, standards, etc.) and to consult the [Project newsletters](#).

Session 2. Main elements from country situation

Countries were invited to present progress on collecting data and developing indicator assessment factsheets, and to share the main outcomes of their national assessment in terms of key messages on the H2020 thematic areas (waste/marine litter, wastewater and industrial emissions).

Most countries have established national committees with multiple relevant agencies to discuss and populate the indicators. For the majority of the countries wastewater is the thematic area with the most widely available data, while collection of data on industrial emissions is most challenging. The availability of data on waste/marine litter varies among countries.

Several countries provided examples of national policies and infrastructure investments that have contributed to improvements in solid waste management (such as restriction of plastic bags), wastewater treatment and regulation of emissions. On the other hand, political and economic instability can hinder or even reverse progress in some countries, for examples, in terms of industrial activity or monitoring efforts.

In terms of trends, countries' representatives highlighted improvements in preventing pollution, in particular through wastewater treatment, re-use of wastewater and solid waste collection and recycling. Nevertheless, demand for and pressure on these processes are also increasing due to a growing population including tourists and refugees. In some areas, sewage is still directly discharged into the sea without treatment and recycling rates are very low, with the bulk of waste being dumped or landfilled. Disparities still exist between urban and rural areas in terms of access to sanitation.

Based on country presentations, which in your opinion are the MAJOR LIMITATIONS to achieving the objectives of H2020 Initiative?

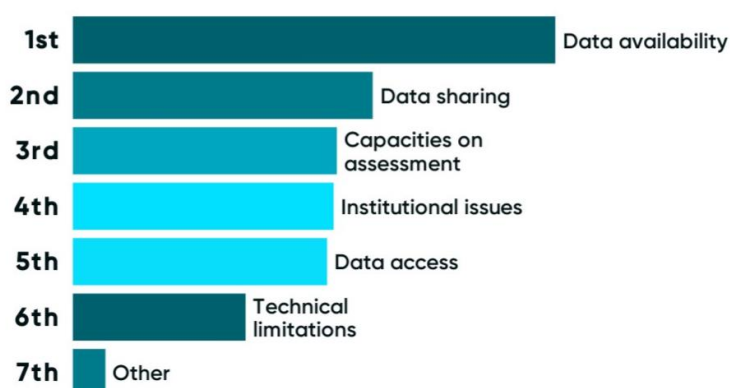


Figure 2 – Results from Mentimeter survey of participants on major limitations to achieve H2020 Initiative's objectives (34 responses)

Session 3. Group work 1 on cross-cutting issues/integration

The first break-out group session involved three discussion groups; each tackling one of the following topics:

- **Cross-linkages between thematics: waste/marine litter, water and industrial emissions**

Key points discussed:

- o link between population growth (including via tourism or refugee influx) and water issues (water supply infrastructure, water quality); population growth and waste generation and management (open dumping); cruise tourism and sea-based pollution
- o link between waste burning and air emissions; air quality and human health; and other impacts of air quality such as on bird migration
- o link between waste dumping and soil contamination; and leaking to coastal areas
- o informal waste sector: incentives, initiatives, and proposal of eco-tax on plastics
- o single-use plastic bag ban – shared experience of its implementation in different countries
- o link between lack of rural sanitation and contaminated groundwater
- o climate change and pathogenic organisms

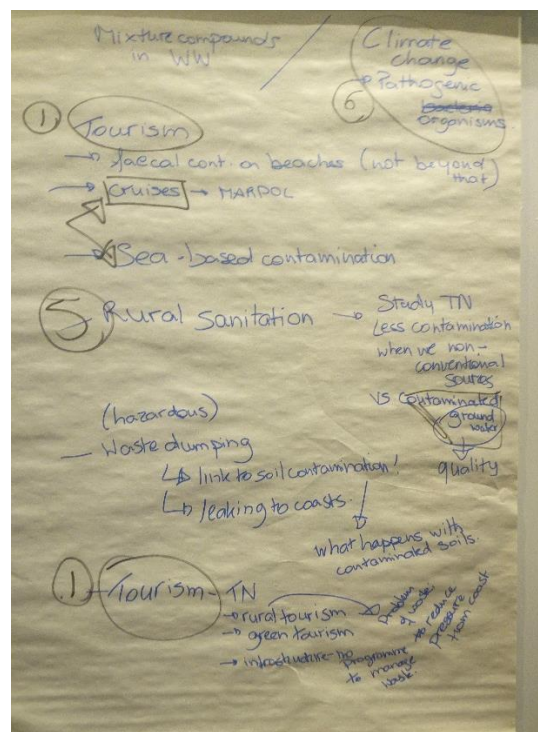
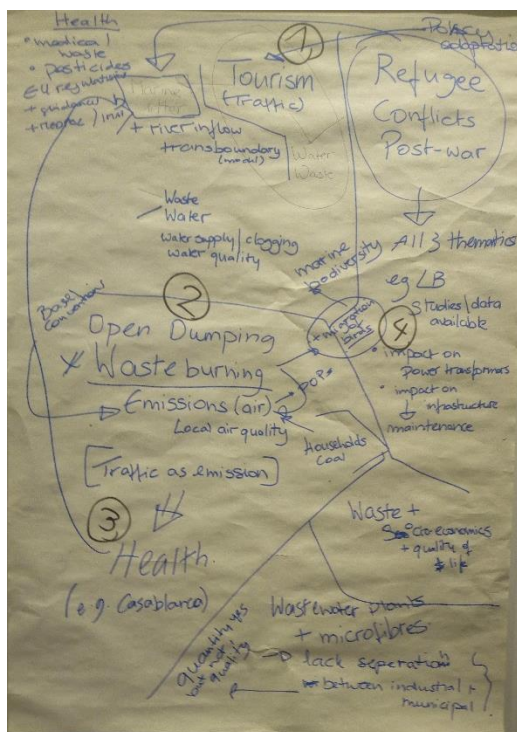


Figure 3 – Input from working group on -Cross-linkages on between thematics

- ***Cross-linkages between responses: why is not enough to tackle pollution on its own?***

During the group discussion, participants expressed both general points related to responses as well as specific examples.

- It was largely recognized that an integrated, holistic vision of the issue of pollution – from its sources (prevention) to the state of pollution – is essential and should underlie any policy strategy.
- Integration is also necessary across sectors and across different policy instruments. Adequate budget and financial means need to be allocated.
- Examples mentioned include the Waste Management Strategy in Egypt; wastewater management in Israel, including its reuse of wastewater; and restrictions on single-use plastic bags in Morocco and in Egypt (considered in one pilot) targeting pollution prevention (marine litter).
- The issue of enforcement was highlighted by several countries as hindering responses

- ***Data, infrastructure, cooperation and knowledge gaps***

The group clustered the identified gaps in three categories:

- Technical – data gaps (monitoring, statistics), data scattered among national stakeholders, lack of analytical capacities, and difficulty to use the regional guidance in national context. Lack of information systems/databases and of interoperability between them, dependency on quick technological changes (new hardware/software that require effective vocational learning and development programmes as well as capacity building/exchange of experiences/knowledge transfer to build staff's technical capacities). Need for data sharing infrastructure.
- Institutional – sustainability of expert network, maintenance of staff competence/skills, limited human resources, availability of dedicated/specialized unit/team dealing with knowledge management.
- Financial – dedicated financial resources to knowledge management – both human and technical, acquisition of data (surveys). Level of resources to better reflect the importance of data/information/indicators to support evidence-based decisions.

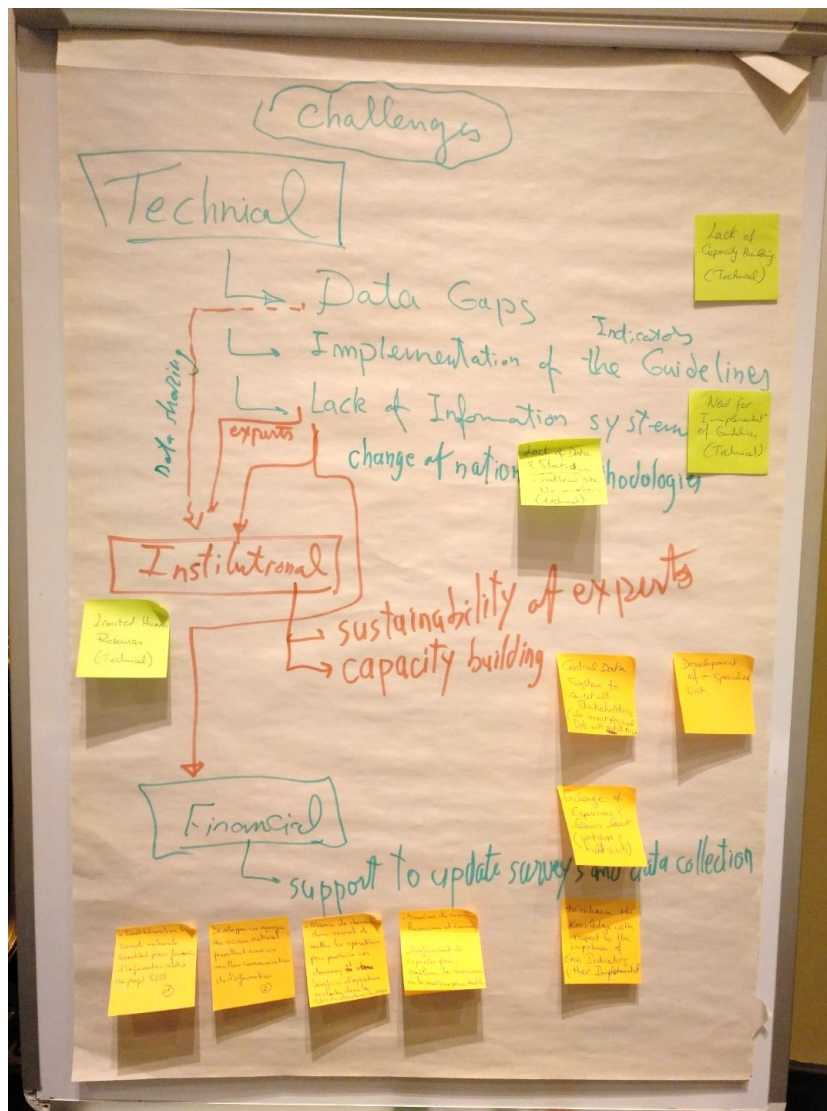


Figure 4 – Input from working group on Data, infrastructure, cooperation and knowledge gaps

The group recognized that the identified limitations have persisted over time – in particular data gap, demonstrating little (or scattered/diffuse, volatile/highly sensitive to political changes) progress in this area of work.

DAY 2	Tuesday 24 September, 2019
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<i>Session 4. Main elements from thematic assessments</i>
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The regional thematic consultants (Bourhan Kreitem -Municipal Waste Expert; Olgac Güven - Marine Litter Expert; Claudette Spiteri-Water Expert; Menouer Boughedaoui - Industrial Emissions Expert) presented their activities on the development of the regional thematic assessments as the core of the H2020 regional assessment.

Waste & Marine Litter

The presentation on the waste and marine litter thematic assessment reminded the participants of the H2020 Waste and Marine Litter Indicators and introduced guidance documentation to assist countries with their assessment tasks, in particular the template for waste indicators assessment as well as the corresponding metadata table for waste and marine litter. The key H2020 policy questions to be answered through the assessment exercise were highlighted. The regional experts encouraged the countries to speed-up the delivery of national data and information to support the preparation of the regional assessment.

Water

The presentation on the water thematic assessment provided an overview of the status of H2020 reporting of WATER indicators, a preliminary regional assessment based on external global data sources (for instance, SDG 6, FAO Aquastat) on the sub-thematic of sanitation and wastewater management, and key outcomes of the ENI SEIS II South Horizon 2020/NAP Water workshop held on 9-10 July 2019 in Marseilles.

Industrial Emissions

The presentation addressed the support provided to three countries (Jordan, Tunisia and Algeria) to coordinate data collection among all data providers for industrial sectors within each country in order to populate factsheets and estimate emissions from all industrial pollutant sources and develop H2020 indicators. It also discussed the proposed way forward to collect missing data, select appropriate emission factors and undertake quality control/quality assurance of activity data collected before use. Data collection presents an important challenge in many instances, linked to data availability and the need for coordination and communication with all stakeholders.

Session 5. Group work on Key Messages

The second break-out group session focused on key messages. In order to support the discussion, participants were invited to reflect on the 25 key messages of the 2014 H2020 Regional Assessment report and indicate whether each message was still valid or not in 2019.

Generally, most key messages were considered to remain valid. Those messages for which there was no consensus as regards their validity include:

- *#1. Steady progress in access to improved sanitation services has been achieved since 2003 in all the ENP-South partner countries*
- *#2. In most of the ENP-South partner countries, access to sanitation is now over 90%, implying that the efforts needed to reach 100 % must be more targeted*
- *#5. The progress in municipal wastewater management is more difficult to assess – the data available do not provide sound evidence or trends (at the regional level)*
- *#6. The extent of wastewater reuse (both treated and untreated) is limited to 1% in the ENP South partner countries*
- *#9. Few countries succeed in reaching full waste collection coverage, especially in rural areas*
- *#14. Reliable data on the type and efficiency of wastewater treatment at the regional scale is largely missing. This, combined with the important proportion of wastewater treatment plants which are not running effectively, hampered efforts to assess the efficiency of the infrastructure in place*

Each group further reviewed the 2014 messages, focusing on those messages for which there was no consensus, in order to identify new elements to be taken into account such as country specific situation, different regional context, higher influence of some drivers, international commitments (SDGs), and so on. The identified new elements will be further taken into account in the regional analysis and reflected in the structure of the report.

Wrap-up of the RM workshop on Assessments

Key elements /recommendations from the assessment workshop were summarised as follow:

- Convergent country situations – data availability and access remain an important issue, with some progress identified but further analysis of the statistical overview is needed to better address the time (trends, current situation compared to start of the initiative) and geographical perspectives and make it resonate with the national and regional policy context.
- Important to provide visibility to the overall national and regional investment in developing data/information/indicator capacities and underpinning knowledge base.
- Urgent for every country to complete the H2020/NAP data collection and share the collected data on InfoMAP platform.
- NFPs/national SEIS Team to use the available guidance and technical assistance possibilities to further develop thematic analysis and progress with the completion of the indicator assessment factsheets and the overall assessment of progress.

- NFPs/national SEIS teams to make use of exchanges of views/experiences and inputs from this assessment workshop to better address cross-cutting elements and knowledge gaps/limitations in the national analysis.
- Importance to highlight country specific issues. NFPs/national SEIS teams to identify and develop case studies to complement national and regional analyses.

Key milestones are:

- ✚ the *back-to-back* 10th meeting of the H2020 Steering Group (to report on the overall progress with knowledge management capacity and provide the main lines of the assessment to support the post-2020 agenda preparation).
- ✚ The 21st Conference of the Parties to the Barcelona Convention, 2-5 December 2019, Naples, Italy.
- ✚ The UfM Ministerial Conference on Blue Economy, first semester 2020.
- ✚ The UfM Ministerial Conference on Environment and Climate Change, second semester 2020.

How to put existing knowledge to use and support a transition?

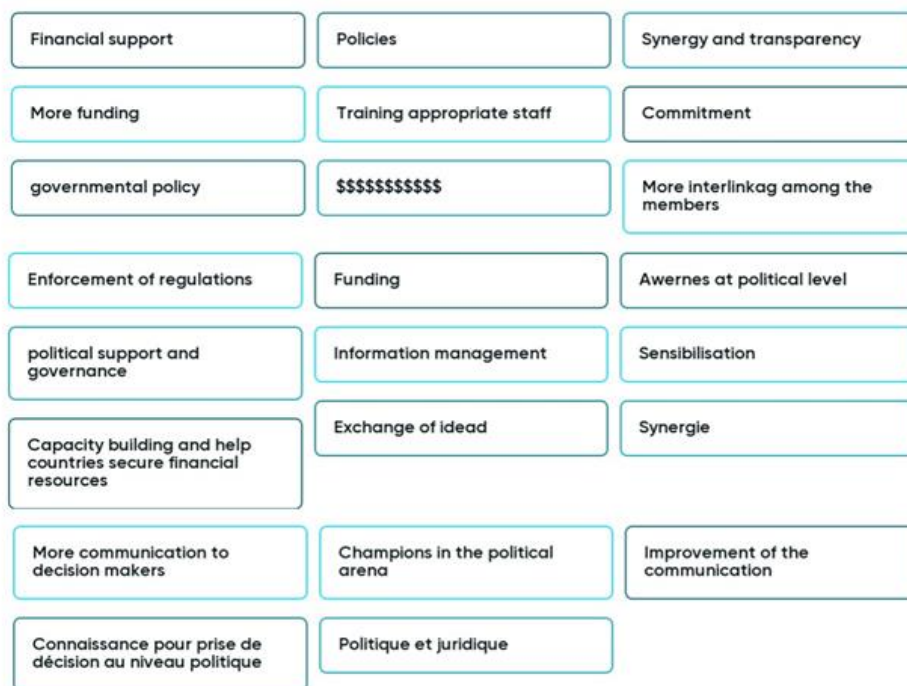


Figure 5 – Results from Mentimeter survey of participants on how to use knowledge to support a sustainability transition (23 responses)

DAY 2	Tuesday 24 September, 2019 – H2020 Review and Monitoring Group Plenary Session
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Session 1. Setting the scene

The Review and Monitoring co-chairs, EEA (Ronan Uhel) and UNEP/ MAP (Tatiana Hema) opened the 10th meeting of the Horizon 2020 Review and Monitoring (RM) Group. The co-chairs pointed out that the H2020 Initiative is drawing to an end and that over the period of the initiative, this group contributed to maintain regular dialogue on environmental information and support capacity development efforts in particular to foster development of national State of the Environment Report and enhance national and regional environmental knowledge base necessary for informed decision making.

Tatiana Hema reminded participants of the governance setting of the H2020 Review group, with the joint meetings with ENI SEIS II South enlarged to MED POL NFPs after 2014. The very successful partnership between the different actors has clearly added value by bringing together several NFPs and institutions and strengthening solidarity while dealing with challenging subjects. She highlighted the considerable progress achieved in terms of SEIS implementation, with investments in building national information systems and sharing of data that feed into a regional infrastructure that is now in place. She praised the commitment of the group to report data necessary for the H2020/NAP indicators

Tatiana Hema pointed out the delay in delivering in relation to the original ambition of the work plan. Such analysis and lessons learned at national and regional level need to be addressed in the post 2020-agenda. Nevertheless, she reiterated that policy should be evidence-based and renewed the joint commitment to deliver the regional H2020 assessment. Together with the State of Environment and Development, both reports will convey strong messages on priorities as regard future work to prevent pollution.

Ronan Uhel highlighted the meeting's high level of participation as a strong signal of the value of coordination. He referred to a few key EEA/EU developments, in particular the production and publication of the *–Europe's Environment -State and Outlook 2020*; the efforts to create a coherent Mediterranean knowledge base; and the impact of the new EC President, Ursula Von der Leyen's, Green Agenda on upcoming EU initiatives and policies in the upcoming post-2020 period.

Session 2. Review of progress

EEA (Cécile Roddier-Quefelec) provided an overview of the progress so far in relation to the objectives of RM Group's work programme 2015-2020. She highlighted that Objective 1 of the work programme (*to enhance optimal national information systems allowing for systemic production of indicator-based reporting and sharing of data*) is not fully on-track with important challenges linked to the data flows (one-fourth of the expected data sets shared so far) and development and management of IT systems and indicator management and services. Objective 2 (*to expand the existing H2020 priorities with a particular focus on water, solid waste and industrial emissions, identify and address additional priority areas*) has been partially achieved, with the methodology and assessment framework fully developed, national activities behind schedule in particular as regard the production of the NAP/H2020 indicators

(below 30% produced) and regional indicator-based assessment report delayed. However, there has been important progress towards meeting Objective 3 (to ensure the sustainability of the governance setup of the H2020 review processes), with all activities carried out as planned. Activities under objective 4 (to encourage the integration of outcome of the H2020 review in the policy making process at regional and national level) remains to be completed (visibility/dissemination, and science-policy interface).

As regard the national level, the situation reported by countries showed a mixed picture in terms of environmental information management and SEIS development with only part of the activities on-track for some countries and most of the activities still facing delays and challenges for most of the countries. The production of the indicators appears to be the most challenging activity, mainly linked to data availability but also to difficulties in adopting a common methodology in the national indicator production processes, therefore delaying the analytical and assessment steps. All countries clearly indicated needs for enhanced support on indicator production.

Activity	Algeria (2018)	Egypt	Israel	Jordan	Lebanon	Libya	Morocco	Palestine	Tunisia
Inter-institutional coordination/national team-committee, thematic cooperation	●	▲	▲	▲	●	●	▲	▲	▲
Data production, collection, dissemination/exchange	●	●	▲	▲	●	●	▲	▲	▲
Indicator production (adoption of methodology, indicator assessment, publication)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Analytical and assessment capacities (national, SoER, contribution to regional assessment processes)	●	▲	▲	●	●	●	▲	●	●
Thematic assessment	Waste/Marine litter	●							
	Water	●							
	Industrial Emissions	●							

▲ Activity on-track /completed
 ● Progress made but activity faces delays/challenges
 ● Activity faces delays/challenges

Figure 6 – Overview of National Progress – September 2019

INFO/RAC (Carlo Cipolloni) presented the UNEP/MAP Barcelona Convention Information management platform – the InfoMAP System – and links with the H2020 data flow. The presentation covered the following points:

- Overview of the InfoMAP System including the data chain architecture, security service, data management, and components of the Data Center;
- Reporting System within the Data Center including the main data flows already in place in the InfoMAP System (Barcelona Convention Reporting System - BCRS, National Baseline Budget -

NBB and Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Program - IMAP) and corresponding reporting tools (such as web forms);

- The InfoMAPNode, developed in the framework of the ENI SEIS II South Support Mechanism Project, which is the geoportal interface to use the Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI). The presentation was on its orchestration, the metadata editor and metadata management, and the spatial datasets consultation;
- The integration of the H2020 data flows and corresponding indicators in the InfoMAP database with the presentation of the H2020 indicators data requirements for the three thematic areas and the collection of data through the filling out of the spreadsheets, and the demo exercise to report them;
- The next steps in terms of development of the H2020 reporting system in particular the elaboration of the data model and corresponding data standard / schema, web forms and conversion tool to automate the reporting process;
- The next steps (roadmap) as regard the provision of technical assistance to countries (for example, on data availability, data sharing, data collection tools and the data policy)

Session 3. Review and Monitoring in post-2020 Agenda

Ronan Uhel (EEA) highlighted the need to capitalize on the investments made and to confirm to the H2020 Steering Group that such investments need to continue. The huge effort put forward (synergies, effectiveness of methods, infrastructure, and so on) confirm that it is feasible. There are gaps but these also contribute to the answer. Therefore, the process needs to be sustained and further improved – linking better with national processes and, in particular, the national State of Environment (SoE) reports to support national development and support formulation of regional policies.

He invited reflection on how to present to political leaders the group's efforts and capacities to produce results, as well as and evidence to answer the question of whether we are progressing towards a cleaner Mediterranean, and how countries can communicate their efforts/investments and how they can continue this investment in the future.

The main points from the discussion covered:

- Support to the preparation of the National Assessments/State of Environment national reports;
- Some challenges on the collection of data and the need for more capacity building at regional and national level, and for different stakeholders;
- The implementation of the H2020 Initiative presented a significant effort from countries but the results at national level are not yet reflecting this effort. Support to national teams and technical actors to put in place the information systems are required, to ensure that H2020 indicators are populated continuously/regularly after the project is concluded. Some institutions maintain indicators but these are not part of H2020. There remains the question of how to integrate these indicators with H2020 in the future.
- The added value of reporting H2020 indicators is not only for regional purposes but as well for national benefit.

UNEP/MAP complemented the “tour de table” by reminding participants that the RM Group still has a very important mandate. There is room for continuing the work on RM, which may be broader in scope, more linked to SDGs. In the past four years this group has proven the importance of the national inter-sectorial coordination. What makes this exercise sustainable is the three information systems in place (MEDPOL, IMAP, H2020). The information system developed by InfoRAC took years to be developed but is now a major achievement. It is positive that countries wish to reproduce such systems at the national level. The system has two functions: i) to assess and group data for national purposes and ii) for regional reporting purposes, in line with the principles of SEIS to build information systems close to data source.

But the most important aspect of sustainability is to have the two institutions, UNEP/MAP and EEA, sitting together. All of the H2020 indicators will continue to be used as part of the NAP implementation and evaluation.

EEA added that there are two conditions for maintaining cooperation:

- ➔ Stability of the national teams: this needs to be understood through “functions” that create the conditions between the three pillars of SEIS (infrastructure, content, and cooperation). Stability means that national coordination should continue and the national team should remain in place and collaborate/cooperate. Through appropriate interinstitutional collaboration, countries are likely to deliver and able to ensure/sustain a network and data flows through validated procedures and tools, thus reinforced by the cooperation between the relevant FPs.
- ➔ Function comes with capacity – to have, use and maintain the information system. An information system is a way of organizing data at the country level. This is important to deliver answers to policy makers, national reporting obligations, and so on, and overall enable a response to the relevant regional questions.

Final Session. Conclusions and recommendations

The meeting acknowledged significant steps forward in developing a Mediterranean knowledge base and the critical role of such a Review and Monitoring group to foster the production of environmental information, based on common standards and to deliver both at national and regional level. The importance of appropriate coordination among all NFPs is being recognised as a must to carry out such tasks.

The countries recognized the importance of the ongoing work, and complementarities between various actions as well as the importance of maintaining the efforts and activities. The excellent governance and coordination established at national (and regional) level has been an important achievement during the second phase of the work. The co-chairs thanked the countries for their strong support.

In the concluding session, the co-chairs pointed out the tight timeline and reminded participants of key upcoming milestones (H2020 Steering Group, 21st Conference of the Parties to the Barcelona Convention, the UfM ministerial conferences) and encouraged countries to speed-up their data delivery and the assessment of the NAP/H2020 indicators to feed into the regional assessment. When

Implementation of the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) principles and practices in the ENP South region – SEIS Support Mechanism (ENI SEIS II South)

contributing to finalizing the regional report, the regional team and the RM group will provide high attention to the coherence of messages, through a transparent and traceable process.

The co-chairs reminded that with the support of the ENI SEIS II South Support Mechanism (in this respect, it should be noted that the ENI SEIS project is extended up to July 2020), further technical assistance will be provided to countries. Countries were advised to be very concrete when formulating the kind of technical support needed in the coming months.