



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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

1. Context

The project builds on the regional EU-funded project “Towards a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) in the European Neighbourhood” (ENPI-SEIS, €5.7 mil), implemented by the European Environment Agency (EEA) in the period 2010-March 2015. The ENPI-SEIS project supported the environmental and statistical authorities in 16 partner countries both in the East and South European Neighbourhood regions in promoting SEIS principles. A key achievement for the ENP South region during the implementation of the project was the first Horizon 2020 (H2020) reporting exercise on the core set of regional indicators and the production – jointly with UNEP/MAP – of the *‘Horizon 2020 Mediterranean report – Toward shared environmental information systems’* for the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial meeting on Environment and Climate Change held on 13 May 2014 in Athens, Greece. The report provides a solid baseline for further cooperation with the ENP South countries in terms of continuing to support the regular production and sharing of quality assessed data, indicators and information relevant for working in the second phase towards achieving of the overall objective of the Horizon2020 Initiative to de-pollute the Mediterranean Sea by 2020.

1.1. Regional context : a reinforced cooperation on reducing marine pollution

The current action on supporting SEIS development in the ENP South region, building on the outcome of the preceding ENPI-SEIS project and the Barcelona Convention efforts on reducing marine pollution, is closely linked to other EU-funded projects that will further support the implementation of the Horizon 2020 initiative in the ENP South region in the coming period (2015-2020). As the overarching objective is to ensure coherence and harmonisation of environmental reporting at regional level in support of more efficient policy-making, it is expected to build on a range of activities and other initiatives in bringing convergence and facilitating countries’ efforts in responding to an increasing number of requests linked to environmental data and reporting.

The Horizon 2020 Initiative for a cleaner Mediterranean initiated in Cairo in 2006¹ and confirmed in Athens² in May 2014 continues to be the leading flagship for the Union for the Mediterranean, and hence for the EU, in the cooperation on environment with the Mediterranean region. While there are a number of instruments and projects put in place to support the cooperation with the Mediterranean, EU support to the implementation of H2020 has mainly materialised through three EU financed projects (implemented in the period 2010-2015) supporting the different H2020 components: Mediterranean Hot Spots Investment Programme – Project Preparation and Implementation Facility (MeHSIP-PPIF) –

¹ Cairo declaration http://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/enlarg/med/pdf/cairo_declaration_en.pdf;
Horizon 2020 timetable 2007-2013:

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/enlarg/med/pdf/2020_timetable_phase1_en.pdf

² http://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/20140515_UfM_declaration_FINAL_compromiseeditorial-changes.pdf

H2020 pollution and investment component, Capacity Building-Mediterranean Environment Programme (CB-MEP) – capacity-building component, and the ENPI-SEIS project implemented by the EEA supporting the Review, Monitoring and Research (RMR) component (see figure 1).

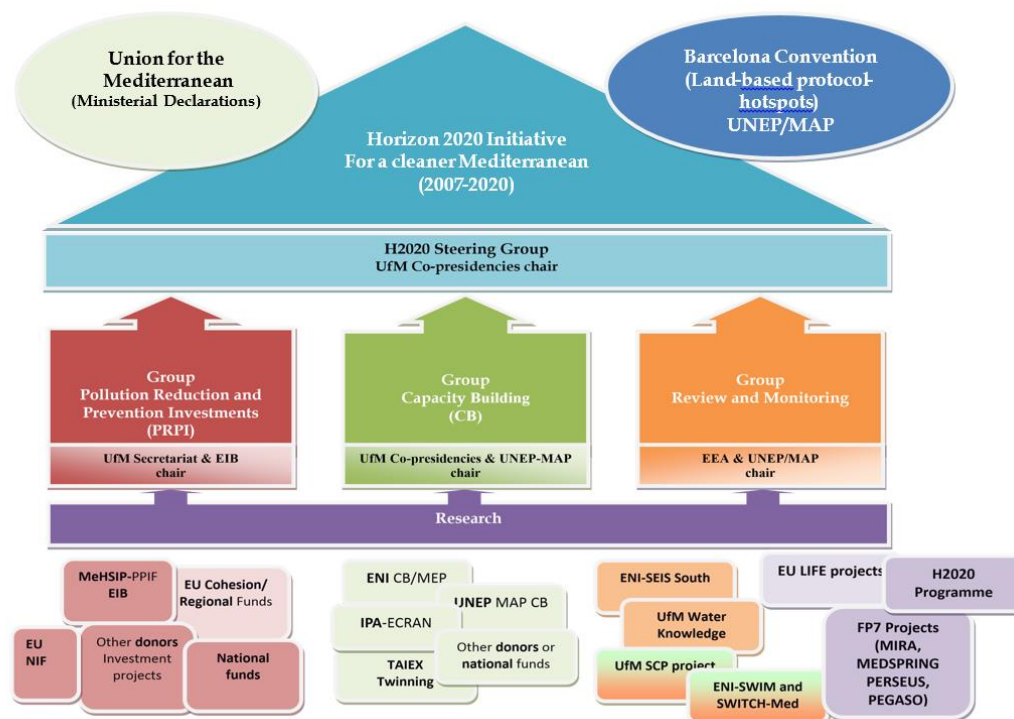


Figure 1: The Horizon 2020 Initiative for a cleaner Mediterranean and supporting components

The EU regional programming, the ENI Regional Southern Mediterranean Strategy Paper (2014-2020) and its multiannual indicative programme (2014-2017) also refer clearly under the objective 2 *Building a partnership for inclusive and sustainable economic development* to protection of the marine and coastal environment, integrated water management and implementation of the H2020 roadmap.

The UfM Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Change in May 2014 in Athens gave a new impetus to this cooperation. The final Declaration (see in footnote 2) unanimously approved calls for a reinforced cooperation on reducing marine pollution – launching the second phase of the Horizon 2020 Initiative, sustainable consumption and production, climate change and some others issues of regional interest such as a better protection of marine biodiversity. The declaration undertook to address outstanding data needs by applying the principles of Shared Environment Information Systems (SEIS) in line with the commitments under the Ecosystem Approach (EcAp) Decision³ of the Barcelona Convention, also contributing to its regional integrated monitoring programme. On this basis and strategic orientations given at the 2014 Ministerial in Athens, a work programme for the H2020 second phase has been developed and approved by the H2020 Steering Group meeting held in Barcelona on 17 December 2014. Within this work programme, the

³ http://195.97.36.231/dbases/CoPDecisions/2013_IG21_CoP18/13IG21_09_Annex2_21_03_ENG.pdf

envisaged activities of the Review and Monitoring (RM) component, co-chaired by EEA and UNEP/MAP, are organised around the following 4 key objectives:

1. To enhance optimal national information systems allowing for systemic production of indicator-based reporting and sharing of data;
2. To expand the existing H2020 priorities with a particular focus on water, solid waste and industrial emissions, identify and address additional priority areas;
3. To ensure the sustainability of the governance setup of the H2020 review processes;
4. To encourage the integration of outcome of the H2020 review in the policy making process at regional and national level.

Specific focus will be given to strengthened countries capacities for integrated monitoring and to improve reporting on industrial pollution and to ensure sustainability of the invested efforts to assess compliance. In addition, complementarity, coherence and synergies among the three H2020 components will be ensured, in order to have results of monitoring and assessments more actively fed back into policy formulation.

In terms of regional context, another important element to consider is the recently adopted Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development (MSSD). The renewed strategic policy framework of the MSSD 2.0⁴ will also provide necessary guidance on the monitoring and assessment needs to move forward securing a sustainable future for the Mediterranean.

Given the fact that the continued cooperation on SEIS is aimed to further support building-up a comprehensive knowledge base in the region, it is of key importance to ensure close links with transversal issues such as the revision of the MSSD and Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework⁵ under development through the Med-partnership, both of which plan to develop indicators. Ensuring synergies with this work in the region and responding to the emerging priorities linked to these processes will also influence the activities to be implemented under the action. Moreover, the development of an Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production for the Mediterranean⁶ (as requested by the Istanbul COP in December 2013) and its formal approval at the 19th meeting of the Contracting Parties in Athens following an extensive consultation process should be considered.

Building of SEIS knowledge base and engagement at an appropriate level in the partner countries has been in focus of the project activities implemented by EEA, which was complemented and strongly supported by the activities of the H2020 Review and Monitoring sub-group activities. The interaction between this group and the project nominated coordinators at country level over the last few years was generally rather active and in most cases with a thin dividing line in terms of responsibilities. The continued cooperation under the SEIS umbrella, jointly led by EEA and UNEP/MAP and in close dialogue with other regional cooperation activities, is expected to encourage the close coordination of all these elements contributing to building a common understanding at country level and a unified approach in managing and sharing environmental information in a regional context. The

⁴ MSSD 2.0 submitted for formal approval by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention at the 19th COP meeting (February 2016, Athens).

⁵ The overall objective of the Framework is to identify and develop a regional approach to climate change adaptation in the Mediterranean marine and coastal environment, with common regional priorities in order to increase the resilience of the Mediterranean ecosystems, infrastructure and communities to climate change.

⁶ <https://www.switchmed.eu/en/policy-maker-corner/regional-actions/consultation-phase>

effective implementation will depend on the continued close interaction between the H2020 Review and Monitoring group and the project governance, also linking to SEIS experiences and best practices at EU level.

1.2. Sectoral context: a high policy demand on building-up a solid knowledge base on the State of the Mediterranean marine environment

The EU has developed an extensive policy and regulatory framework on water and marine resources, in particular the [Water Framework Directive](#) and the [Marine Strategy Framework Directive](#), whose principles and experience gained are very relevant to the ENP South countries. The [2008 Euro Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Water](#) that took place in Jordan agreed to develop a Strategy for Water in the Mediterranean (SWM) that was drafted over 2008-2010. Although Ministers failed to adopt the SWM, its guiding principles are widely accepted and the SWM remains a de facto policy tool for the region and have guided the activities of the EU financed activities, in which the [Sustainable Water Integrated Management project](#) (SWIM) is currently ongoing. In 2014 the Senior Officials of the UfM approved the project "[Towards a Mediterranean Water Knowledge Platform](#)". Promoted by International Office for Water (IOWater) and the Institut Méditerranéen de l'Eau (IME), the project aims to facilitate the production and sharing of water information to all concerned parties in six pilot countries: Jordan, Lebanon, Monaco, Morocco, Spain and Tunisia. The project will contribute towards providing common basis for the development of National Water Information Systems (NWIS), improving dialogue and planning processes and making information more easily available to all stakeholders. In addition, the organisation of common data infrastructure provided by the project is likely to generate value-added in terms of services beyond the water arena and thus contribute to sustainable growth in the Mediterranean countries and provision of stable baseline for attracting investments in the region. The ultimate goal of the Mediterranean Water Knowledge Platform will be the development of monitoring tools for integrated water resources management (IWRM) and climate change adaptation.

In 1999 the parties to the Barcelona Convention adopted a [Strategic Action Programme to Address Pollution from Land-Based Activities \(SAP-MED\)](#). SAP-MED identified categories of pollutants and activities to be eliminated or controlled by the Mediterranean countries by 2025. In this context, countries have prepared inventories of all pollution sources on their coasts called the National Baseline Budget of emissions and releases (NBBs), as well as National Action Plans (NAPs) describing the policies and investments that each country intends to undertake to reduce pollution from identified "pollution hot spots". NAPs were formally endorsed in 2005 and UNEP/MAP started their revision and [update in 2014](#).

In September 2009 has been launched the "[Regional Network for Integrated Solid Waste Management in the MENA⁷ Region](#)" (SWEEP-Net) with the support of the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development through the "Gesellschaft für International Zusammenarbeit" (GIZ) with the objective to set-up a common regional platform for exchange of best practices, expertise, experiences, technical assistance and policy advice in the field of resource and solid waste management. Over the past few years the SWEEP-Net

⁷ MENA region: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia & Yemen

assisted its partners in developing appropriate policies and market incentives in order to promote an economic development that allows for a sustainable resource management. The produced within the [ENPI-SEIS project](#) (Dec 2009-Q1 2015) first regional assessment entitled “[Horizon 2020 Mediterranean report - Toward shared environmental information systems](#)” is part of the mid-term review of the Horizon 2020 Initiative and the report has been coordinated by the EEA and UNEP/MAP. The report is synthetically describing the process in setting-up a regular review mechanism and is developing the regional analysis based on the key indicators agreed in the framework of the H2020 Review and Monitoring sub-group. Important part are reports annexes, where are gathered analyses written by the countries on the three H2020 priority areas. Among the report key findings are as follows:

- Sanitation has improved steadily in the region over the last decade. Between 2003 and 2011 the proportion of the population with access to sanitation increased from 87.5 to 92 %. There are still 17.6 million people in the region without sanitation, a third of them living in urban areas.
- There is great potential to reuse wastewater in the region. Currently only around 1% of wastewater is reused, so it is possible to make better use of this resource instead of discharging it into the sea.
- Progress in urban wastewater management is difficult to assess as the data available do not provide sound evidence on trends at the regional level.
- While solid waste generated in the region is still approximately half the per capita level in the EU, waste generation in the southern Mediterranean region has grown approximately 15% over the last decade, mostly due to a growing population and increased consumption.
- Waste management needs significant improvement. Around three quarters of waste is collected, but most of this is still disposed of in open dumps, which can have health impacts and find its way into the sea leading to environmental problems. Less than 10% of the waste collected in the region is recycled.
- Industrial emissions have a heavy impact on the Mediterranean. While pollution from heavy metals in seawater has decreased in recent years, local marine pollution from cities, industry and tourist resorts is still leading to pollution of seas and beaches.

Within the implementation of the ENPI-SEIS project and as part of building a regionally shared environmental information system and towards building the regional set of indicators, the EEA with the support of UNEP/MAP has started the implementation of Pollution Release and Transfer Register (PRTR) at national level. Based on a previous experience of UNEP/MAP in supporting PRTR development, this activity supported the establishment of pilots for national PRTR databases in interested ENP South countries, including procedures and tools for collecting necessary data, through the setting up of national teams and supporting them (with training and appropriate software) in the development of a PRTR system for the H2020 indicators on industrial pollution. Six partner countries took part in the [PRTR pilots](#) (Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Tunisia, Palestine and Morocco) and participated in the organised regional training activities in the framework of the ENPI-SEIS project.

The EEA has a central role in collecting and providing environmental information in Europe with the support of the [European environment information and observation network](#)

(Eionet). Together they have been a leading proponent of SEIS from the start of the initiative in 2008 that has in 2010 been extended to the countries in the European neighbourhood. Gradually over the past few years the SEIS concept has been uptaken in a number of the regional activities mentioned above resulting in the establishment and development of more openly shared environmental information systems, better informed policy-making and closer integration of various national stakeholders and civil society into environmental decision making process. For countries in the Southern neighbourhood, the further application of SEIS principles⁸ and use of knowledge from the available EEA tools and systems (such as 'Reportnet'⁹) would provide a practical solution to organise their data collection and handling in response to various national and international demands. Last but not least, the Arab League¹⁰ is an organisation that aims at strengthening the relations between its member states and coordination of their policies, including environment protection. Potential links between the SEIS Support Mechanism and the activities of the Arab League could be beneficial in terms of wider promotion of SEIS concept, principles and good practices.

1.3. Lessons learnt

The implementation of the activities under the ENPI-SEIS project and in particular the reporting exercise with the partner countries towards the production of the first Horizon 2020 assessment report have identified the need to ensure more sustainable governance and IT structures at national level and continuity of work and dialogue. Complex, sensitive and volatile political situation in the countries of the region, combined with frequent changes in the administrations requires close monitoring and necessary measures to the benefit of continued cooperation in the environmental field. In terms of infrastructure, aligning with existing reporting systems (be that at national, regional and/or global level) remains a key challenge in order to avoid creation of parallel reporting systems and duplication of efforts. Furthermore, consolidation and expansion of the regional indicators identified should continue considering more the pressure-state-impact framework and operationalise them while further implementing SEIS principles, also referred to in the EcAp decision. This also links to the call of the H2020 Steering Group for more coordination and integration of regional reporting processes (Barcelona Convention, H2020, MSFD) where the joint efforts of EEA and UNEP/MAP for the further cooperation provides a clear value-added in organising and conducting an effective streamlining of the underpinning data flows and assessments. The coordination with on-going work for establishing multi-purpose spatial data infrastructures in the region will have to be strengthened.

This regional process is highly dependent on the level of engagement and participation of the national stakeholders. The stakeholder involvement and decision-making process being different from country to country, greater attention should be given to adjust the regional process to the needs and constraints of the countries. To this aim, appropriate stakeholders dialogue and inter-institutional coordination at national level should be reinforced with dedicated resources to help the interaction and activities at and in-between Environmental

⁸ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/seis/index.htm>

⁹ EEA 'Reportnet' infrastructure is aimed at supporting and improving data and information flows as it integrates different web services in all aspects of the data flows: www.eionet.europa.eu/reportnet

¹⁰ <http://www.arableagueonline.org/>

Ministry and agencies, National Statistical Offices and all relevant stakeholders. To that end, awareness raising through project activities of the value-added of signature of inter-institutional agreements and/or creation and strengthening of working groups at national level could support this process at country level. The provision of dedicated national assistants in the beneficiary countries in the second phase of the project will be advantageous to more actively engage stakeholders, to better operationalise daily work together with the nominated NFPs, to coordinate planned events and to follow-up the implementation of the agreed activities. The appointment of such assistants has to be conditional upon the envisaged country gap-analysis at the initial phase and the subsequent setting-up/adoption of the national work programme, to stress the country ownership and buy-in into the project implementation.

Some key recommendations identified by the Result-Oriented Monitoring missions on the ENPI-SEIS project have been taken on board in designing the current action:

- Preparation of national work plans that should translate the SEIS implementation into country-specific activities and be in support of national policies. These national work plans would be based on the countries needs as recorded in the updated country reports under ENPI-SEIS project (March 2015) to ensure continuity and transition into the next phase of activities.
- Broader communication activities on the benefits of SEIS and wider engagement of stakeholders, including EUD and civil society, at country level.
- Appointment of national assistants to support the coordination, interaction and implementation of the country-specific and communication activities.
- Better streamlining and complementarities between different existing networks and partner initiatives, among which using the implementation capability of the other H2020 components.

Adopting the SEIS principles could be an important tool for empowering citizens to be informed about environmental decision-making and for engaging civil society, increasing SEIS visibility, and widely communicating its principles and benefits in appropriate fora.

1.4. Complementary actions

Essential for the success of this activity is the close partnership with UNEP/MAP and ongoing activities and reporting done on the implementation of the Barcelona Convention and its Protocols, in particular NAPs update, EcAP monitoring programme implementation, MSSD review, SCP action plan, as well as Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework (RCCAF) developed under the MED-Partnership. Over the last years, complementarities and synergies of the joint EEA-UNEP/MAP efforts have been instrumental for the successful promotion and uptake of the SEIS concept in the ENP South region. A coherent regional approach with relevant activities, EU bilaterally supported programmes, project preparation facilities (MeHSIP¹¹ II, NIF) and country-level actions implemented in the frame of other ongoing projects, such as Sustainable Consumption and Production ([SWITCH-MED](#)), Climate actions ([CLIMA-South](#), RCCAF), water (SWIM-Support Mechanism, water knowledge platform), Regional Solid Waste Exchange of Information and Expertise Network ([SWEEP-Net](#)), H2020 capacity building ([H2020 Support Mechanism](#)) is of key importance for reaching a sustainable

¹¹ Mediterranean Hot Spot Investment Programme (MeHSIP)

outcome of the investments made. Consolidated efforts are needed as activities either tackle shared resources (i.e. the Mediterranean Sea, shared water resources) for which collaborative responses are necessary or common challenges (water scarcity and water quality degradation) and there is an important value in regional co-learning, regional peer pressure, as well as exchange of experience and best practices both between the EU and Southern countries as well as South-South co-operation.

Linkage to potential countries' input into the UNEP/Live platform and wider initiatives such as Eye on Earth would be explored, based on the agreed data policy, and responding to an increasing need for sharing official environmental data and information through online tools.

Under its regular cooperation with the 39 member and cooperating countries in the Eionet, the EEA brings in the knowledge and experience of working in particular with the countries of the West Balkans (supported through IPA funding) and Turkey (regular EEA member) – ensuring coherence to an-all-inclusive Mediterranean cooperation. The priorities of deepening the cooperation between the EEA, the EEA members countries and partner countries in the ENP South region, together with on water and marine topic, sustainable consumption and production patterns, climate change adaptation measures, provision of environmental knowledge and information services, knowledge co-creation and modern data management are embedded in the current EEA Multiannual Work Programme (MAWP) for the period 2014–2019. The accumulated Eionet expertise and knowledge has been shared through a dedicated enhanced cooperation activity (targeting 4 ENP South partner countries) under the '[InSEIS](#)' project (2014-2015) on jointly identified priority areas. The good practice examples of this cooperation would be taken forward in the implementation of the ENI SEIS II South project.

Additionally, regular dialogue will be ensured with other ongoing environment-related projects and initiatives (where relevant also training and capacity building activities in the identified priority areas) that would bring added-value to reaching the objectives of the present action. Subsequently, complementarities and synergies in implemented activities will be ensured among all three components of the H2020 Initiative (RM, CB and Pollution Reduction and Prevention Investments – PRPI).

1.5. Summary of ENPI-SEIS project (phase I)

The objectives of the ENPI-SEIS project were to support countries in: 1) keeping the state of their environment under review; 2) strengthening their capacity to meet environmental reporting obligations within the framework of national legislation and international environmental agreements; 3) facilitating the sharing of environmental information both at national and at regional levels; 4) producing regular data flows in the identified priority areas through the agreed set of indicators¹²; and 5) decision-making through improved access to environmental information.

¹² The selected [six priority indicators targeted for the ENP South region](#) are as follows:

- 1) Municipal waste generation per capita
- 2) Amount of collected and treated municipal waste, including collection rate and type of treatment
- 3) Share of population with access to an improved sanitation system (total, urban, rural)
- 4) Volume of wastewater collected, of which volume of wastewater treated
- 5) Nutrient concentrations in transitional, coastal and marine waters of the Mediterranean Sea
- 6) Release of toxic substances and nutrients from industrial sectors

The implementation of the project, and carried out activities were underpinned by the three pillars of SEIS:

- cooperation: building networks of providers and users of data and information;
- content: generating policy-relevant and comparable environmental information;
- infrastructure: using open, shared and modern web-based information and communication technologies.

The main catalyser for mobilising resources was the commitment given by national institutions to depolluting the Mediterranean under the H2020 Initiative and contribution to the activities of the Review, Monitoring and Research (RMR) sub-group. In several countries special coordination committees and Memoranda of Understandings on data sharing were put in place between various institutions to coordinate SEIS at national level.

The indicator development process was steered in parallel by the existing H2020 RMR sub-group and the established ENPI-SEIS Working Group on Environmental Indicators, composed of two members nominated by the NFPs from each ENP South partner country. The work led to the selection of six main indicators in the H2020 priority areas of municipal waste, urban waste water and industrial pollution. Following this, the countries were engaged in the reporting and production of the thematic assessment process that was based on the data and information reported by countries. The key outcome was the production of the first regional assessment: [Horizon 2020 Mediterranean report - Toward shared environmental information systems](#), which was prepared by EEA and UNEP/MAP and is part of the mid-term review of the Horizon 2020 Initiative which aims to reduce pollution in the Mediterranean by year 2020. The activities carried out within the ENPI-SEIS project (Dec 2009-Q1 2015) – and further uptaken with smaller number of countries under the InSEIS project (2014-2015) – were based on the EEA experience in working with the EEA/Eionet member and cooperating countries in developing SEIS and building a sound environmental knowledge community in wider geographical area. Examples of spin-off twinning projects implemented by organisations from the EEA member countries include:

- Twinning project in Israel on building the PRTR system, implemented by UBA Germany.
- Twinning project in Algeria on establishing national environment information system as foreseen by the law (Loi sur la protection de l'environnement et le développement durable), implemented by UBA-Vienna.

2. Objectives and expected results of the SEIS Support Mechanism-South

The global objective is to contribute to reduced marine pollution¹³.

The specific objective of the action is to improve the availability and access to relevant environmental information to the benefit of effective and knowledge-based policy-making in the ENP South region.

¹³ As stated in the Action Document for the GreenMed II programme: ENI South regional environment and water programme 2014-2015.

Based on a balanced partnership between the EEA and UNEP/MAP while ensuring proper linkages with the work programmes of the two institutions during the period of project's implementation as well as with the agreed work programme of Horizon 2020¹⁴ for the period 2015-2020, the expected results at the end of the ENP SEIS South 2 are:

- R1: The H2020 indicator set is stabilised, refined and complemented in order to be able to serve multiple purposes, as well as to ensure that the progress of achieving H2020 objectives is properly measured, while also contributing to assessing compliance with commitments under the Barcelona Convention.
- R2: The in-country processes for organising sharing of data sets underlying the H2020 indicators are stabilised.
- R3: The infrastructure for reporting offered by the EEA ('Reportnet') and UNEP (UNEP/MAP Reporting Network) is more widely used.
- R4: Indicator-based H2020 report(s) and assessments are produced in line with good practices from the EU region. This will be complemented by similar reports developed for the EU and West Balkan countries under the upcoming MSFD reporting cycle (2018) in order to come up with a comprehensive picture of the whole Mediterranean region and align the various reporting processes.

This would be achieved through specific activities (in line with previous efforts) aiming at supporting regional reporting through established and regular national data flows based on common requirements, ensuring coherence and harmonisation as well as policy relevance and uptake of the reported information in support of better environmental governance.

Work will be structured around the below 6 work packages (WPs) across 4 thematic clusters:

1. **In-Country support:** enhance the national capacities by addressing particular national needs and contribute to regional coherence. The countries needs and commitment will be reflected in the agreed national SEIS work plan, which will be the prerequisite for allocating dedicated country support.
2. **Indicators and Assessments:** ensure regular production of indicators, agreed at regional level under ENPI-SEIS project, and indicator-based assessments relevant to inform and monitor progress of the Horizon 2020 Initiative and contribute to achieving the objectives of the other work packages.
3. **Data and statistics:** ensure timely production and sharing of harmonised, quality assessed statistics and data related to Horizon 2020 thematic priorities.
4. **Infrastructure and data management** (Common Information system): establish and maintain national and regional environmental information systems and data sharing in line with gradual establishment of SEIS.
5. **Visibility and communication:** ensure high visibility of the actions implemented and active communication with the key project partners and beyond.
6. **Coordination and management:** ensure effective and smooth implementation of the project activities, including project management and administration, as well as regular coordination with relevant partners and initiatives.

¹⁴ Horizon 2020 work programme 2015-2020 as agreed by the H2020 Steering Group in December 2014 <http://enpi-seis.pbe.eea.europa.eu/assessment/assessment-south/horizon-2020-workprogramme-2015-2020/h2020-workprogramme-en>, Actions and priorities table <http://enpi-seis.pbe.eea.europa.eu/assessment/assessment-south/horizon-2020-workprogramme-2015-2020/h2020-workprogramme-activity-table-en>

The activities under the WP 1-4 will be clustered into the following four thematic clusters, with the first three ones in line with the H2020 priority areas while the fourth one has considerably less weight in terms of scope of work and resources to be mobilised within the project:

- **Water** – inland, coastal and marine water, including freshwater and wastewater.
- **Waste** – municipal and industrial waste, including domestic and hazardous waste.
- **Industrial emissions** – emissions to air, to water and to soil. Pollutants and parameters to be in line with Barcelona Convention and H2020 requirements.
- **Cross-cutting issues** – ensuring synergies with the developments in the areas of climate change (adaptation and mitigation activities), SCP, SDGs, environmental accounting, to the extent relevant to achieving the objectives of this action.

3. Countries covered by the action

The action is covering the following nine ENP South partner countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia. Cooperation with Syria remains suspended until further notice from the EC.

EEA cooperating countries from the West Balkan region (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo¹⁵, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, cooperation with which is supported under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance – IPA) and Turkey as an EEA member country may be associated to the activities foreseen by this action, in accordance with Article 16(1) of Regulation (EU) No 232/2014.

Complementarity, synergies and interactions with regular monitoring and assessment work of the Northern Mediterranean countries that are part of the Eionet network (France, Spain, Italy, Greece, Croatia, Slovenia, Cyprus and Malta) will be developed as appropriate and in line with the regular interaction the EEA maintains with its member countries. 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 (i.e. ECRAN project in the West Balkans).

4. Specific activities, outputs and role of partners

The project is structured around **six Work Packages (WPs)** covering **four thematic clusters (TC)** for the further cooperation with the ENP South. In section 4.1 are described the objectives, expected outputs and division of responsibilities for implementing each of the WPs, while section 4.2 addresses the context of work in the four thematic clusters. This interaction between the WPs and the thematic priorities could be illustrated by the conceptual framework for 2015-2018 as presented in the figure 2 below.

¹⁵ Under the UN Security Council Resolution 1244/99

Conceptual framework for SEIS Support Mechanism - South

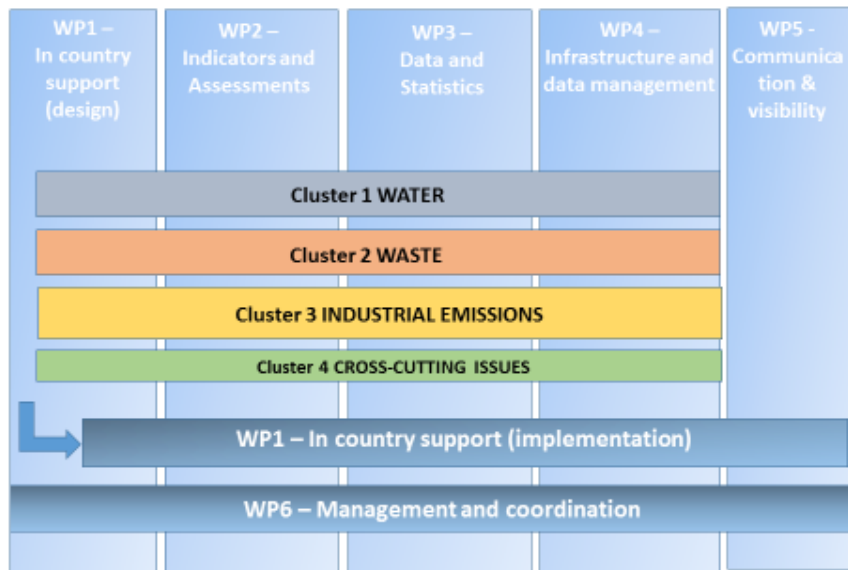


Figure 2. Conceptual framework for SEIS Support Mechanism - South

4.1 Specific activities

Work package 1. In-country support

The work under this work package will aim to enhance the national capacities by addressing particular national needs to build the country capacities and contribute to regional coherence and objectives.

Engagement of key national stakeholders will be ensured through the development and agreement with the countries on realistic country national work plans during the first year of the project implementation and ways to operationalise them. Activities in these work plans would be based on the updated country reports prepared under the ENPI-SEIS project where activities for the period 2015-2020 have been captured, identifying particular country needs, linked to expert capacities, legislative, financial and administrative aspects. Work on these elements has already been initiated under the previous project, where the countries' commitment sometimes was hindered by the lack of resources to implement the agreed activities. The support to dedicated national assistants is aimed to ensure more active 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 would respond to the voiced country needs to strengthen the national coordination (and the nominated NFPs) and provide more targeted support to the development of NEIS and enabling in-country processes for data sharing. The appointment of such assistants at country level is dependent on the countries' commitment, the agreement of the national work plans and the assessment of human resources needs (envisaged as the first task under this WP to be addressed within the project initial phase/1st year).

Depending on the identified needs, the dedicated assistant may not be a full-time person, but various dedicated experts to support specific tasks/activities¹⁶.

This dedicated country activity should also ensure efficient support to the regulatory framework of the Barcelona Convention (SAP-MED/LBS protocol, regional plans) and monitoring capacities of the countries. Under this activity, emphasis will be given to institutionalise and better integrate existing SEIS/H2020 national structures/committees. Dependant on the countries' commitment and allocated resources, additional support will be provided to the partner countries in developing the production of national SoER¹⁷, indicator management system and related data services, coordinating closely with ongoing work for establishing multi-purpose spatial data infrastructures in the region. This will also aim to ensure strong synergies with other thematic projects (producers or users of environmental information and knowledge) e.g. research, investments and support mechanism. This WP will also contribute to support objective 3 of the Horizon 2020 Review and Monitoring group work programme 2015-2020¹⁸, in particular support to coordination efforts with other national coordination structures and committees. It is envisaged that the annual H2020 RM meetings – in the period 2016-2019, will be covered through the H2020+ and Sustainable Water Integrated Management Programme.

The activities to be implemented under this work package will be:

- Preparation of national work plans through regular discussions and bilateral agreements with each partner country;
- Deployment of dedicated national assistants in the partner countries to ensure better operationalisation of daily work, coordination of planned events, and follow-up on the implementation of the agreed activities among key stakeholders;
- Regular exchange and biannual meetings with the appointed national assistants;
- Monitoring and follow-up of the implementation on the agreed national work plan in line with the H2020 objectives for the second phase of the initiative.

Deliverables:

- Agreed national action plan(s) between key national stakeholders to enhanced sharing and use of environmental information.
- Monitoring reports on implementation of the action plan(s) presented to the project Steering committee annually.

Work package 2. Indicators and Assessments

The demand for assessments and in particular the call for an increased convergence of reporting processes and related assessment work in the period up to 2019 (H2020 assessment report – envisaged to cover all the Mediterranean countries, EcAp, MSFD) will be the backbone of this work package. The work package is expected to maintain a strong focus on the link between the indicator and assessment work, while building on the achievements in the previous phase and with emphasis on the relevant H2020 aspects.

¹⁶ TAIEX could be an additional possibility of expert support, complementing the proposed national assistants.

¹⁷ The production of national SOER is not a project output as such – under this WP methodological support to SOER preparation is envisioned, while the countries will be responsible for its production.

¹⁸ H2020 Review and Monitoring work programme, objective 3: “To ensure the sustainability of the governance setup of the H2020 review processes”.

As requested in the H2020 work programme, this activity will deepen, refine and complement the existing scope of H2020 priorities (water, solid waste and industrial emissions), in order to ensure that the progress of H2020 Initiative is properly measured. In that process additional priority areas would be identified and could be addressed such as marine litter, hazardous waste, non-point sources, pollution prevention taking into account the data availability, current expertise in the field (including research results) and the NAP revision process. The current assessment framework of H2020 will be further refined - in a way that is applicable to all Mediterranean countries, and without creating double reporting obligations - both in terms of reporting template and process, in synergies with other regional and national assessment processes (EcAp, MSSD, MSFD) and in order to organise the information in a systematic and harmonised manner. Integration to better assess in holistic way water, solid waste and industrial emissions will be tested and their contribution to related GES.

The activity will ensure a regular update of the current H2020 set of indicators (indicator factsheets specification¹⁹ and assessment²⁰), applicable to all Mediterranean countries, in coherence with EEA Core Set of Indicators and MEDPOL/NAPs indicators, and develop methodology (factsheets) and initial assessment - wherever feasible - for the new ones (contaminants, hazardous waste, marine litter, climate change vulnerability). It should be emphasised that the production of thematic indicator-based assessments at national and regional level will serve multiple purposes such as to assess the progress of achieving H2020 objectives, while contributing to assessing compliance with commitments under the Barcelona Convention.

The 2nd indicator-based H2020 assessment report (tentatively scheduled for 2019) will be prepared, including country-level assessments, ensuring mainstreaming of the reporting with other relevant processes (NAPs/LBS protocol, Regional Plans, EcAp, MSFD). The convergence and coordination with these will be of particular importance for this WP to ensure appropriate linkages and a full coverage of the Mediterranean region at the end.

This activity is closely linked with WP1 (country development), WP3 (inputs data, baseline), WP4 (data exchange, information system/-s), and also with the overall coordination (WP6) ensuring appropriate synergies with other partners, and in particular inputs from/to other H2020 components. This WP will allow support to objective 2 of the Horizon 2020 Review and Monitoring group work programme 2015-2020²¹.

The activities to be implemented under this work package will be:

- Development of methodological documents, such as indicators specification and factsheets (in line with the practice under ENPI-SEIS outputs), promoting the use of assessment guidelines in line with internationally applied methodology.
- Expert visits and remote/online tutoring supporting the preparation and national coordination of the country profiles/country-level assessments in line with best EU/EEA practices.

¹⁹ H2020 Indicators specification factsheets available here <http://enpi-seis.pbe.eea.europa.eu/data-and-indicators/enpi-seis-south-h2020-indicators/indicators-factsheet>

²⁰ H2020 Indicators latest assessment available here <http://enpi-seis.pbe.eea.europa.eu/data-and-indicators/enpi-seis-south-h2020-indicators/indicators-assessment>

²¹ H2020 Review and Monitoring objective 2 : “to expand the existing H2020 priorities with a particular focus on water, waste and industrial emissions, identify and address additional priority areas”

- Short-term expert missions supporting building national capacities on indicator management and integrated assessments, following the interactions held under the ENPI-SEIS and InSEIS projects.
- Continuous monitoring and regular review of H2020 priorities as foreseen by the H2020 phase II work programme (2015-2020).

Deliverables:

- Methodological documents produced (tentatively on: PRTR, Emission Factors, Monitoring and Quality Assurance).
- Biannual updates/review of the H2020 priorities in 2016, 2018 and 2020 in line with the H2020 phase II work programme.
- Contribution to the 2nd Regional indicator-based H2020 assessment report (2019).
- National H2020 assessments and outlook as part of the next regional report.

Work package 3. Data and Statistics

The work under this work package will cover relevant aspects on availability of data and statistics, supporting methodological work on data production, harmonisation and providing expert support to the environmental monitoring at country level. Building on previous H2020 developments, this activity will aim to ensure appropriate statistical support (production, methodology, harmonisation, quality assessment and control, data processing) and strengthen the capacities of National Statistical Systems to enlarge and consolidate the production of environment statistics needed to support the regular production of the H2020 indicators and related assessments (WP2). Emphasis will be given to the specific geographical scope of H2020 – i.e. hydrological river basins and coastal zones, where both aspects have to be tackled depending on the thematic focus (hydrological basin for water and industrial emissions, coastal zones for waste) and also complementary to each other. This is to be linked with the previous WP2 and the refinement of the assessment framework.

The implementation of this activity will be done in line with the national work plans agreed by each partner countries (see under WP1) and the integrated monitoring programmes to be developed as part of the EcAp implementation and NAPs update. The result to be expected under this particular activity would be an increased amount of openly shared data and statistics on the addressed priority areas in the partner countries.

This WP is also functionally linked to infrastructure and data management activity (WP3), in particular to maintain and improve efficiency of existing data flows and support new data flows and related QA/QC procedures of the expanded H2020 issues. This WP will also contribute to actions related to systemic data production of the objective 1 of the Horizon 2020 Review and Monitoring group work programme 2015-2020²².

The activities to be implemented under this work package will be:

- Capacity building at national level (in the form of at least one technical workshop per country addressing the methodological work on data production, one regional workshop on data harmonisation aspects - subject to countries' commitment to it - and expert support) targeting the partners from the statistical authorities on production, methodology, harmonisation and quality of data;

²² Objective 1 of the Horizon 2020 Review and Monitoring group work programme 2015-2020 reads "To enhance optimal information systems allowing for systemic production of indicator-based reporting and sharing of data".

- Preparation and provision of technical assistance, guidance/methodological documents and technical assistance support to experts in relevant national authorities;
- Exchange of experiences through visits to EU/Eionet member countries and regional workshops with other ongoing project/activities and relevant partners (such as UNSD, EMWIS, etc.);
- Technical assistance to NSS experts in the form of training sessions and workshops on existing EU models in setting up inter-institutional mechanism at national level for development and management of indicators (WP2) and related data flows (WP4).

Deliverables:

- Workshop reports
- TA mission reports from the country and regional events organised
- Guidance/methodological documents produced (at least 4).

Work package 4. Infrastructure and data management

The focus is on infrastructure/data management aspects that are needed to develop further the building of the infrastructure pillar of SEIS at national and regional level. Activities envisaged will aim to support development and maintenance of relevant Mediterranean data flows with support from both EEA and UNEP/MAP, potentially from Eurostat and other relevant regional partners as needed, as well as to develop reference data sets and necessary guidance documents in support of data exchange.

This WP will maintain and improve efficiency of existing data flows (including PRTR) and support creation of new data flows and QA/QC procedures based on expanded H2020 indicators. It will foster the development and management of IT systems (infrastructure for data, automation, reporting tools Reportnet/InfoMAP) and set-up appropriate H2020 indicator management and data services. This activity is closely linked with WP1 (country-specific developments), WP2 (for indicator management system and data services), WP3 (inputs data, baseline) and also with the overall coordination (WP6) ensuring appropriate synergies with other information systems developments (e.g. Water platform, climate change platform, etc.) and reporting processes at global level (e.g. GEO). This WP will also contribute to actions related to data flows, IT systems as well as indicator management and data services of the objective 1 of the Horizon 2020 Review and Monitoring group work programme 2015-2020 (see footnote 17 and 21).

The activities to be implemented under this work package will be:

- Provide technical support to ensure better integration of data and information at regional level infrastructure (Reportnet, InfoMAP) enabling regular data flows on H2020 areas of work and UNEP/MAP reporting and assessment processes; exchange of EU experience on recent data policy developments and data exchange protocols in place.
- Provide technical expert support for further development of PRTR online tools to ensure full compatibility (in terms of web-applications and reporting tools at national level) in line with MEDPOL requirements for NBB, NAPs. The PRTR pilots in the six ENP South countries under the ENPI-SEIS project would be the basis for further work, where wider coverage of sectors and industries could be sought, possibly also the private sector.

- Regional workshops/meetings (approximately once a year) on common infrastructure/aspects linked to coherence of data sharing, QA/QC and data exchange.
- Transfer of EU/Eionet examples in setting up web-applications and reporting tools on data management and data services.

Deliverables:

- Annual monitoring report on H2020 indicator management and data service.
- Meeting reports documenting the progress in the countries and coherence of data sharing and exchange, reporting tools and formats, as well as QA/QC aspects.
- Report from national workshops in each of the ENP South partner countries on the PRTR pilots extended to include more industries and chemicals.
- PRTR guidelines validated at dedicated regional event(s), possibly back-to-back with MED POL FP meeting.
- Inventory/catalogue of PRTR good practices in the ENP South region as part of consolidated knowledge-base.

Work package 5. Communication and visibility

The work under this work package will aim to implement the activities and objectives of the communication and visibility plan, which is an integrated part of the project proposal.

The objective of this work package is to promote the visibility of the project activities at European, regional and national levels. In doing this a strong link with the communication activities in EEA and UNEP/MAP would be ensured, aligning the project implementation with other relevant EEA and UNEP/MAP products and assessments. Any project visibility activities will be implemented in close coordination with the identified communication/PR experts in the national authorities in the partner countries.

The activities that will take place during the period covered by the communication and visibility plan will be:

- Organisation of a launch and close-out high level events (possibly back-to-back with H2020 Steering Group or other H2020 sub-group meetings);
- Identifying with EUD planned events where SEIS project and approach could be given visibility (on regular basis);
- Organise (at least one) national visibility event in each of the partner countries (brining in also civil society) – at a high-level as possible linked to the EUD activities to increase the visibility and impact, as well as buy-in - and agree on further national communication activities and visibility events (to be reflected in the national work plans), in coordination with NFPs and the EU Delegations;
- Promote project activities to relevant partners from research and academia (also in support of the H2020 Research component) in order to increase the project visibility;
- Visibility side events at different European and regional fora;
- Manage the website, populate news section, write bi-annual newsletter and produce promotional materials (leaflets, flyers, banners, etc.) to ensure adequate dissemination of project outcomes and best practices;
- Use various media sources to promote project activities and engage wider community and civil society in the partner countries;

- Produce relevant publications and visibility materials (reports, event and conference materials, etc.);
- Translation of guidance and methodological documents of relevance for the SEIS development into Arabic and French.

Deliverables:

- Project communication materials produced and shared at relevant regional and national events.
- Contribution to newsletters/info materials of other key regional partners provided on regular basis.
- Organisation of SEIS-awareness raising and side events linked to relevant regional and/national meetings.

Work package 6. Management and coordination

The work under this work package will ensure effective and smooth implementation of the project activities – horizontal and vertical coordination among the different work packages and thematic clusters, regular coordination with relevant partners and initiatives, including project management and administration.

- Project team close dialogue and coordination (EEA-UNEP/MAP).
- Project Management Group at project coordination level, comprising the project team (EEA, UNEP/MAP) and representatives of EC DG NEAR, ENV, RTD, EEAS, Eurostat & JRC. The PMG will meet on a six-monthly basis, either with face-to-face meetings or with conference calls / video-conference.
- Project Steering Committee at regional level, comprising 2 representatives from each of the partner countries (designated project NFPs from relevant environment and statistical authorities – in order to ensure continuity, countries will be encouraged to keep the same NFPs as in phase I), as well as relevant key partners from international organisations.
- Regional thematic/expert networks, similar to the [Eionet NRC structure](#), to support work in the priority thematic areas. Dedicated working groups could be established as needed (such as the WG on IT and environmental indicators set-up during ENPI-SEIS).
- Regular dialogue and coordination with the H2020 coordination group and among the H2020 groups and their chairs.
- Regular dialogue and coordination with Eionet through Mediterranean coordination group.
- Synergies with other relevant regional activities and initiatives (EU-funded and from other donors).

4.2 Thematic clusters

Thematic Cluster 1. Water

This thematic cluster will cover inland, coastal and marine water; fresh and waste water, quantity and quality aspects. Following up on work undertaken during the first phase, special attention will be given to address the specific H2020 scope, in particular the hydrological river basin and coastal areas, where both aspects would have to be tackled depending on the thematic focus. This thematic cluster is closely linked to existing regional efforts and initiatives in the area of water (UNEP/MAP on the implementation of the existing regional plan on BOD from WWTP, pollution loads and levels monitoring aspects including water management aspects (Plan Bleu), EMWIS, SWIM, MWKP), and will contribute and complement them as needed, in particular in supporting the enhancement of water statistics and data (WP3), water information systems (WP1, WP4) as well as requirements under the Barcelona convention (nutrients, contaminants monitoring, ecosystem approach). Focus will be given to refine the existing indicators (IND 3, 4, 5), in parallel to exploring new aspects within the scope of the H2020 (non-point sources of pollution, contaminants), linking it to the integrated monitoring programmes of EcAp and NAPs review. In terms of assessment, assessment needs should drive data related activities using environmental accounting as a framework.

Thematic cluster 2. Waste

This thematic cluster will cover municipal and industrial waste, including domestic and hazardous waste. As indicated for thematic cluster 1, attention will be given to address the specific H2020 scope, in particular coastal areas and coastal cities. Based on lessons learned from the cooperation under the ENPI-SEIS project, emphasis will be given to enhance the knowledge base (data and statistics, monitoring of progress, assessments) in particular to cover the informal sector, material flows, marine litter and requirements under upcoming SCP regional plans. This cluster will be closely coordinated with UNEP/MAP work on the implementation of Marine Litter Regional Plan and SCP Regional Action Plan, as well as Switch-Med, SWEEP-Net and the H2020 Capacity Building support mechanism to ensure complementarity of activities.

New approaches to better assess the waste issues, addressing the informal sector, marine litter, pollution prevention, waste and material flows accounts will be tested. The existing indicators (IND 1, 2) will be refined and others explored (linking with MEDPOL/NAPs indicators – hazardous waste, marine litter). For marine litter, the indicators of the Ecosystem Approach, still to be developed, could be used as reference and this action will further use/develop indicators to support the implementation of the monitoring requirements of Article 12 of the Marine Litter Regional Plan.

Important attention will be given to support building structures for waste reference centres in the countries (some aspects tested under InSEIS project in Jordan) to better support the overall information and knowledge co-creation process.

Thematic cluster 3. Industrial emissions

This thematic cluster will cover emissions to air, to water and to soil. Pollutants and parameters covered will be in line with Barcelona Convention and H2020 requirements. This cluster is closely linked to the work done under the Barcelona convention and existing reporting cycle (LBS protocol and regional plans, EcAp, PRTR pilots developed under the previous cooperation), and to the capacity of countries to generate and share data and information on industrial emissions. Based on lessons learned from previous phase, an increased technical support on this thematic cluster is required, both on the production (monitoring capacities of countries, including further expansion of PRTR), data handling and then on interpretation and production of indicators and assessment. Attention will be given to support expansion of the knowledge base on this topic (monitoring/PRTR, indicators and assessments) and better address the full spectrum (air, water, soil – the latter not being addressed in phase I), while trying to ensure higher participation of industries in the project. The countries that have participated in the PRTR pilots under the ENPI-SEIS project could share their experience with the others under 'south-to-south' exchange of experience.

The indicator related to industrial emissions (IND 6) will have to be further refined to better fit with MEDPOL NAP/EcAp inputs and requirements (consider additional contaminants, non-point sources, pollution prevention, hazardous waste), and test new approaches to industrial emission assessment.

Thematic cluster 4. Cross-cutting issues

This thematic cluster (as mentioned in section 2 with less weight in terms of work and resources to be mobilised compared to each of the previous three) will ensure complementary and adequate integration of the developments over the coming years in areas such as climate change adaptation and vulnerability, Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), environmental accounting – in order to keep a comprehensive picture of H2020 in a larger context and address the pollution issue in a more integrated way.

The focus of this cluster is to ensure convergence of the SEIS Support Mechanism efforts with other projects and initiatives to allow an effective streamlining of data, information and production of related assessments that will contribute to an enhanced knowledge base for the Mediterranean. In the area of climate change, development or further elaboration of climate change vulnerability indicators is foreseen to be addressed in complementarity with other ongoing projects/initiatives (Clima-South, MedPartnership Climate change adaptability framework- MediCIP). Appropriate linkages to the SCP action plan and the proposed indicators will be ensured, as well as for the MSSD 2.0 and SDGs development. Attention will be given to embed relevant outcomes of other projects/initiatives addressing these issues of cross-cutting nature with the indicators and assessment process (WP2) and the development of information system and data flows at national and regional level (WP1, WP4).

5. Methodology

In implementing the current project, the MDIAK²³ and DPSIR²⁴ conceptual frameworks developed by EEA are useful tools to be deployed. The MDIAK reporting chain supports an analysis on the basis of the information used in the assessments and whether this can be traced — an aspect that underpins credibility. The DPSIR analytical framework, meanwhile, helps clarify the scope of the assessment and the degree to which assessments are integrated across the cause-effect chain, or narrowly-based focusing on, for example, simple descriptions of the state of the environment. In order to extract the relevant knowledge for making assessments underpinned by indicators and reliable data; EEA has evolved into using the MDIAK framework in reverse order.

A variety of models, already tested under ENPI-SEIS and InSEIS projects, will be applied to mobilise a wide spectrum of expertise in the provision of technical assistance to the countries. This includes: expert visits to the countries (with Eionet involvement); assistance to provide guidance on nationally-driven and/or regional processes (e.g. provision of guidelines, desk studies, review of documents); study tours and working visits to the EEA, Eionet-related entity and/or to relevant national authority in an Eionet country; and dedicated hands-on training on relevant aspects covered under this activity.

The adopted in-country support should ensure an overall smoother regional process by taking into account and addressing the strengths and weaknesses of each individual country to engage and deliver the expected outcomes with an increased quality.

5.1. Method of project implementation

The project activities will be based on clear engagement and commitment of the beneficiary countries to further engage in building SEIS and promoting its principles in environmental decision-making. This will be achieved through development of national road-maps/work-plans with clear milestones, country-level activities and achievable results formally agreed by key national stakeholders. The formal signature of letters of intent/MoU between the EEA and the respective country shall be put in place when possible.

The proposed method of implementation is, on one hand, to use the EEA/Eionet networking model as a template for further building of SEIS. Eionet is structured around a sustainable and stable reporting network via national focal points and thematic national reference centres being mandated to report on behalf of the country on specific environmental topics. On another hand, the action would be implemented through a balanced partnership with UNEP/MAP, where a better integration with the MAP network and governance structure will have to be ensured to the benefit of effective mainstreaming and streamlining of the Mediterranean knowledge and environmental decision-making.

²³ The **MDIAK** reporting chain: **M**onitoring – **D**ata – **I**ndicators – **A**ssessment – **K**nowledge aims to specify and distinguish between the different types of information needed in particular for countries to report in support of the policy process.

²⁴ The **DPSIR** analytical framework (**D**riving force, **P**ressure, **S**tate, **I**mpact and **R**esponse) is used to structure thinking about the interplay between the environment and socioeconomic activities in order to help design assessments, identify indicators, and communicate results and can support improved environmental monitoring and information collection.

Building on the experience from the ENPI-SEIS cooperation in the first phase (2010-2015), the nomination of two National Focal Points (NFPs) – from environmental and statistical authorities (also in line with the MEDSTAT cooperation) – have proven to be an efficient model. Given the strengthened cooperation with UNEP/MAP during the second phase and in order to allow better coordination and integration with the MAP and UfM/H2020 governance structure and networks, the model of having 2 NFPs will be maintained, also in order to ensure closer dialogue and coordination at national level. Having dedicated project NFPs to steer the project implementation has to be distinguished from any arrangements and coordination mechanisms agreed at national level to support the overall objective and might lead to forming SEIS committee(s)/group(s). Establishing links with relevant experts in other line ministries/national authorities on particular thematic area is a step towards setting up a network of National Reference Centres (NRCs) at national level²⁵, which would foster the expert discussions at national level and in turn would support adequate exchange of expert knowledge with corresponding EU partners.

Under the current project, the possibility to provide a direct support to ENI South partner countries is foreseen in a capacity of national assistant to be based close to the nominated NFPs in the countries and to be funded by the project for the duration of the project, while also agreeing on a mechanism for progressive handover of this function to a national organisation/administration. The provision of the national assistant would be subject to partner countries' commitment, as well as development and endorsement of a national work plan. Such a support could be full-time or part-time depending on the need of the specific tasks and activities. It will be considered on a case by case basis, including the most optimal way to provide the financial means to sustain the national assistants under the project.

The specific activities within this action (in particular under WPs 1-4) are aimed to ensure coherence and convergence among all Mediterranean countries, covering the three geopolitical entities (EU Mediterranean Member States, West Balkan countries and Turkey and ENP South countries), while targeting the ENP South countries specifically. Thus, complementarities and synergy support will be sought and ensured through EEA/Eionet and regional activities (i.e. under IPA funding, as well as TAIEX, Twinning), as well as through the activities of the H2020 Review and Monitoring (RM) sub-group, covering 22 countries in the Mediterranean region. Within the duration of the current project, annual meetings of the H2020 RM sub-group will be held.

²⁵ The NRCs are key partners in the Eionet network (<http://www.eionet.europa.eu/partners>) covering an expert or group of experts in national environmental organisations, which are regular collectors or suppliers of environmental data at the national level and/or possess relevant knowledge of specific environmental issues, monitoring or modelling and these persons/organisations are nominated and funded by the country to work in specific thematic areas agreed with the EEA.

5.2. Stakeholders and target groups

The key target groups at national level will be the relevant ministries, government authorities and statistical offices responsible for the collection, production and dissemination of environmental data and information. To ensure proper implementation and coordination of the project activities and in line with the practice followed under ENPI-SEIS project, two National Focal Points coming from the Ministry of Environment and the Statistical Offices will have to be designated (or reconfirmed from the first phase) by each partner country. At the start of the action, discussion with each partner country on designing the in-country support and activities to be included in the national road-map is among the very first tasks to be performed. Linkage to the UNEP/MAP-MEDPOL FPs will be made to ensure continuity in the cooperation activities. At the same time in order to ensure the expected streamlining of efforts and synergies with other invested efforts, involvement of other NFPs/coordinators of regional projects/initiatives (such as the H2020, UNEP/MAP and its components (MEDPOL, INFO RAC and Plan Bleu), UNEP/MAP-MCSD, SWIM, EMWIS, SWEEP-Net, Eionet) will be at the heart of the project implementation.

Apart from the close contacts with the Ministries for Environment and Statistical Offices, links/contacts with other relevant ministries/agencies/departments responsible for Water, Agriculture, Tourism, Industry, Energy, Transport, Regional Development, Economy, Public Health/Epidemiology, International Affairs and Finance will be ensured as appropriate. Where relevant for the purpose of the action, stakeholders from sub-national/regional/local authorities (governorates, regions, municipalities, etc.) will be involved, and as appropriate – representatives of civil society, non-governmental organisations, research institutes, associations of various relevant professionals (chamber of commerce and industry, organic agriculture, cultural heritage, eco-tourism, etc.) and media professionals.

National events/workshops held in the project framework will aim to engage relevant stakeholders in the targeted topics, as well as other partners engaged in disseminating environmental information and carrying out educational and training activities, linked to environmental data mainstreaming.

The EU Delegations in the ENI South partner countries will be regularly consulted on and informed of the project activities.

5.3. Project governance

The governance structure underlying the implementation of the project activities will include:

- At regional level, a **Steering Committee** will be convened once a year to guide the project implementation at regional level while considering relevant country-specific activities and developments. The Steering Committee will comprise 2 representatives/project NFPs from each of the partner countries, European Commission, Project team as well as relevant key partners from international organisations. As much as possible, the Steering Committee meetings will be held back-to-back with other regional and/or key meetings, such as those of Eionet.

- At national level, the project implementation will be ensured through the appointed **National Focal Points** from the relevant government authorities (in environment and statistical domain), with working groups established at inter-institutional level as needed. The national coordination will be reinforced by a dedicated national assistant, as mentioned in section 5.1 above. The project will welcome, as appropriate, the setting-up of a formal national governance structure (e.g. national SEIS committee) to meet on a regular basis (possibly 2 times a year).

In the interest of ensuring synergies with the regular monitoring and assessment work done in the Northern Mediterranean countries (France, Spain, Italy, Greece, Croatia, Slovenia, Cyprus and Malta), regular interaction/exchange will be ensured – to the extent possible – among representatives of all Mediterranean countries, including also the West Balkan countries and Turkey; this will be held either as back-to-back discussion with the regular NFP/Eionet meeting and/or within the H2020 Review and Monitoring group (also possibly arranged once or twice back-to-back with Eionet meetings).

5.4. Monitoring of progress

The monitoring of progress achieved will be ensured through the regular Management Group meetings/discussions, the annual project Steering Committee meetings, and national workshops and events, and it will be documented in the progress reports to the European Commission (DG NEAR).

5.5. Visibility

Communication and visibility guidelines of the EU will be followed in all project activities, in terms of project outputs, website, publications, meeting documents and communication materials by the EEA and all its partners, as well as events in the countries. Given the nature of the action and its implementation in a balanced partnership between an EU Agency (EEA) and a UN-body (UNEP/MAP), the communication and visibility activities will have to consider and build on a broader spectrum of regional activities and programmes.

6. Project duration

The foreseen duration of the activity is 4 years, from 1 February 2016 to 31 January 2020, with inception phase of six months (February-July 2016).

ABBREVIATION LIST

BP/RAC	Blue Plan Regional Activity Centre (France)
CEDARE	Center for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe
CP/RAC	Regional Activity Centre for Cleaner Production
DG ESTAT	European Commission - DG Eurostat
DG ENV	European Commission - Directorate General Environment
DG NEAR	European Commission - Directorate General European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations
DPSIR	Driving forces-Pressures-State-Impacts-Responses
EcAp	Ecosystem Approach
EEA	European Environment Agency
EEAS	European External Action Service
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIONET	European Environment Information and Observation Network
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ETC	European Topic Centre
EU	European Union
EUWI	EUWI - European Water Initiative
GEO	Global Environmental Outlook
GEO	Global Earth Observation
GEOSS	Global Earth Observation System of Systems
GMES	Global Monitoring for Environment and Security
H2020	Horizon 2020 Initiative
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IMAP	Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme
IMS	Indicator Management Service (EEA)
INFO/RAC	Information and Communication Regional Activity Centre (Italy)
INSPIRE	Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe
JRC	European Joint Research Centre
LAS	League of Arab States
MAP	Mediterranean Action Plan
MDIAK	Reporting chain: Monitoring-Data-Indicators-Assessments-Knowledge
MED	Mediterranean region
MEDPOL	Programme for the Assessment and Control of Marine Pollution in the Mediterranean Region

MEHSIP	Mediterranean Hot Spot Investment Programme
MEHSIP-PPIF	Mediterranean Hot Spot Investment Programme - Project Preparation & Implementation Facility
MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
MSSD	Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development
NAPs	National Action Plans
NBBs	National Baseline Budgets
NEIS	National Environmental Information System
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAP/RAC	Priority Actions Programme Regional Activity Centre (Croatia)
PRPI	Pollution Reduction and Prevention Investments component of H2020
QA/QC	Quality Assurance/Quality Control
RCCAF	Regional Climate Change Adaptation Framework
Reportnet	Eionet's infrastructure for supporting and improving data & information flows
REMPEC	Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (Malta)
RMR	Review, Monitoring and Research sub-group
WP	Work package
SCP/RAC	Regional Activity Centre for Sustainable Consumption and Production (Spain)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPA/RAC	Specially Protected Areas Regional Activity Centre (Tunisia)
SEIS	Shared Environment Information System
SOER	State of the Environment Report
SWEEP-Net	Regional Solid Waste Exchange of Information and Expertise Network (in Mashreq and Maghreb countries)
SWIM	Sustainable Water Integrated Management (SWIM – Support Mechanism)
SWITCH Med	Switching towards more sustainable consumption and production (SCP) patterns in the Mediterranean (SWITCH Med Programme)
TC	Thematic Cluster
ToR	Terms of Reference
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP/MAP	United Nations Environment Programme / Mediterranean Action Plan
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
WB	World Bank
WFD	Water Framework Directive