

**2nd Steering Committee of the ENI SEIS II South Support Mechanism project
8th meeting of the H2020 Review and Monitoring (RM) Group**

16-18 October 2017

**Hotel H10 MARINA, Av. Bogatell, 64-68 E
08005 Olympic Village Barcelona, Spain**

Summary Report

Objectives of the meeting

- I. To take stock of the progress achieved since the 1st Project Steering Committee in December 2016 and capture relevant developments linked to the key priority areas and governance structure(s) at national level in the context of H2020 work programme and the H2020 Review and Monitoring sub-group;
- II. To endorse the regional plan of activities of the ENI SEIS South Support Mechanism until 2020 with focus on the project activities in 2018;
- III. To identify synergies/actions for joint implementation in the coming period with relevant projects, partners and other existing initiatives in the context of the H2020 work programme and the H2020 RM mandate;

Set-up

This was a joint meeting of the 2nd Steering Committee of the ENI SEIS II South Support Mechanism project and the 8th meeting of the Horizon2020 Review and Monitoring (RM) Group, in line with the model adopted in December 2016. The meeting duration covered 2 and ½ days with bilateral discussions foreseen in the margins before or after the plenary. Each sessions were be co-chaired by the representatives of the EEA and UNEP/MAP.

Participation

The meeting gathered 45 persons, with representatives from 8 ENI South countries (i.e. the two SEIS National Focal Points and one MED POL Focal Point or their representatives), two representatives from Montenegro and Tukey, as well as European Commission DG NEAR, UfM secretariat, partner organisations EMWIS, SWIM-H2020 SM and EU member States (Malta).

Key highlights from the meeting

The meeting

- took stock of progress achieved in 2017 with the review and monitoring component of H2020 and implementation of ENI SEIS II South and discussed relevant developments linked to the key priority areas and governance structure(s) at national level;
- acknowledged delays in the implementation of the project, national activities are behind schedule in particular as regard establishment of SEIS national teams and preparation of bilateral agreements (Small Scale Funding Agreements) to operationalise the in-country support and SEIS national work plans;
- acknowledged objective difficulties reported by partner countries as regard administrative capacity, lack of domestic political support, and occasionally opposition to sharing information within branches of the administration and national partners,



European Environment Agency



- discussed steps towards the next H2020 assessment, highlighting the need to further consolidate the proposed revised list of H2020 indicators, pointing out the requirements for ensuring appropriate data sharing processes supporting various assessment efforts, and acknowledging the assessment framework for the next H2020 assessment;
- endorsed the regional plan of activities of the ENI SEIS II South project for the period 2018-19 in the context of the H2020 programme of work for the year 2018;
- reiterated the close links with the NAP and IMAP implementation and convergence with other projects and initiative in particular to maximise the regional capacities in the most effective way;
- Acknowledged the need to put a strong emphasis on implementation to achieve tangible results, in particular in the context of the Union for the Mediterranean Declaration on Environment and Climate Change adopted in May 2014.



Description of sessions and summary of progress

Day 1. Monday, 16 October 2017

Session 1. Setting the scene. Stock-taking of progress

Mr David Stanners, Head of Programme Partnership and Networks at European Environment Agency, opened the meeting, clarified the meeting objectives and highlighting the political context and progress with the cooperation in the field of environment with the Mediterranean partner countries. The combined 2nd Steering Committee of the ENI SEIS II South Support Mechanism project with the 8th meeting of the H2020 Review and Monitoring (RM) Group brings together the H2020 initiative with the EU policy framework in the implementation of SEIS together with other ongoing and planned regional projects/initiatives in the Mediterranean in the period up to 2020.

Mrs Tatiana Hema; Deputy Coordinator from UN Environment Mediterranean Action Plan (UN Environment/MAP) welcomed the participants and introduced latest developments and achievements from the UNEP/MAP Programme of Work (PoW). Ms. Hema also presented the main activities foreseen in the PoW for the next biennium (2018-2019) of UN Environment/MAP underlining the prospect activities that are underpinning with ongoing work in the project, especially activities in relevance with Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (IMAP) and NAP implementation follow up. She emphasized the importance of good cooperation in the region which gives strong ground to implement activities in the project.

Session 2. Developments in the cooperation with the partner countries since the previous SC meeting in Athens, Dec 2016

This session reviewed the progress achieved in the SEIS Support Mechanism activities and the H2020 Review and Monitoring work since the previous meeting in Athens, 12-14 December 2016.

Mrs Galina Georgieva, Head of Group provided a summary of the ENI SEIS II South Support Mechanism project and progress in the implementation of the H2020 programme of work for the second period of the initiative. The second year of implementation is marked by significant delays in the implementation, mainly due to changes within National Focal Points (NFPs), late set-up and mobilisation of the regional team and resources, longer than expected process to develop national work plans and corresponding bilateral funding agreements (Small Scale Funding Agreement SSFA). Good progress has been made on defining indicators, with broad agreement from partner countries. Changes within the political agenda and postponement of the next UfM Ministerial conference on environment and climate change to end 2019 beginning of 2020 will allow more time to develop the planned activities. Nevertheless, the programme of work remains tight.

Mr Erol Cavus, ENI Project Manager at UN Environment/MAP/MAP-MEDPOL provided an overview of the progress on the envisaged in-country support, this are the activities on Work Package 1, covering relevant governance aspects, work of National Implementation Teams, validation of the work plans at national level and deployment of the legal agreements (Small Scale Funding Agreement) with UNEP/MAP. Mr. Cavus mentioned the progress underlining the criteria that was developed to prioritise activities for in-country support stemmed from National Work Plans. He also briefed the Steering Committee on the progress achieved on SSFA



development dialogues until September 2017, indicator development, PRTR and related MEDPOL activities relevant to the project.

Mrs Cécile Roddier-Quefelec, Project coordinator ENI SEIS II South Support Mechanism introduced the latest developments with respect to data, indicators and assessment covering activities carried out under Work Packages 2 & 3, focusing on outcome from the [workshop on indicators](#) held in May 2017 in Copenhagen, the [thematic webinars](#) held with the partners and countries in September 2017 to revised the H2020 list of indicators for each thematic areas (Water, Waste and industrial emissions). She introduced development on the roadmap for the preparation of regional assessment in the context of relevant regional processes and other reports in the pipeline. The regional thematic experts are fully mobilised, concepts notes and proposal for H2020 renewed indicators developed and discussed with partner countries, and mobilisation and set-up of thematic expertise at national level initiated. Efforts ongoing to reinforce SEIS national team to support data and indicator work as close as possible from the source. Complementarity with other programmes and initiatives (SDG, SWIM, WKP, MED POL/IMAP, etc) undertaken.

Mr Michael Assouline, EEA Project Officer and Mrs Céline Ndong InfoRAC (UN Environment/MAP) introduced the latest developments with respect to the regional infrastructure (Work Package 4). The objective is to pave the way forward with concrete solutions to build the regional infrastructure supporting implementation of SEIS and objectives of the Barcelona Convention and to reflect on strategies deployed on data management and infrastructure implementation. They provided preliminary results from the metadata survey.

Mrs Georgiva presented the coordination, visibility and synergies activities under Work Packages 5 & 6 highlighting the various features of the project website and production of the project newsletters, inviting partner countries to use those tools to share any relevant information, news and briefing as regard progress at national level.

Day 2. Tuesday, 17 October 2017

Session 3. Country level activities – national SEIS work plan of activities in the context of H2020 Initiative

Under this session, country representatives presented progress made at national level on the H2020 Initiative and SEIS developments structured around the following elements:

- Progress at national level on H2020 work
- Governance at national level
- National Work Plan activities

The country presentations ran in alphabetical order starting from the ENI South partners (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia), followed by the West Balkan representatives (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro) and Turkey. Representatives from EU member states complemented with their own experiences as well.

The overview from country presentations showed that the majority of partner countries (5 out of 8) have established governance/cooperation capacities, other (3 out of 8) need further support to



strengthened inter-institutional cooperation. Some countries have very advanced systems of collection and dissemination of data while in others work has not started. Only half of the country do have some sort of appropriate content management (data production & collection, indicators development and management), 3 indicate some progress and 1 indicate any progress. Support on this pillar needs to be intensified. Infrastructure development is clearly lacking behind, with only 1 country showing advanced stages of infrastructure development, 5 facing partial development and 3 with very limited development. Nevertheless, the core functions to be put in place to address those limitations have been identify and integrated into the national plans.

Almost all the countries, including those well advanced, reported insufficient domestic political support and the need to improve administrative capacity. Several countries indicated some concerns to share information that they consider sensitive.

Among the experiences presented, the following key highlights are to be noticed: new collaborative method applied by Egypt for the preparation of the State of the Environment Report including extensive use of key indicators, Egypt underlined as well their activities to develop EIA procedure. Israel experience on implementing PRTR, and further improvement of their national reporting system. Jordan experience on online air quality monitoring and efforts to improve the quality of industrial WWTPs monitoring. Libya highlighted its need in capacity building to set up national information system.

Session 4. Key activities – towards H2020 assessment

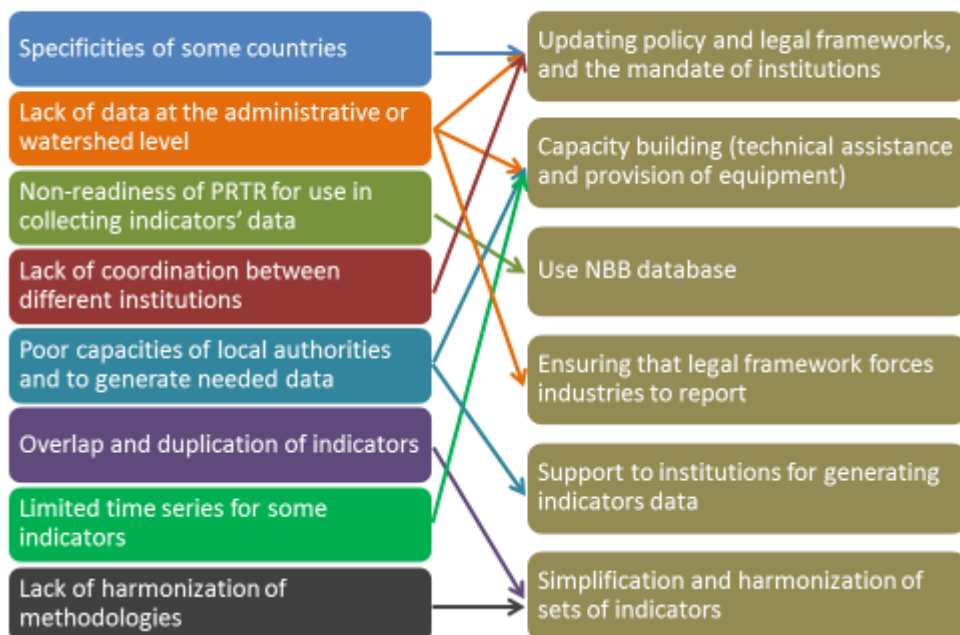
This session ran as interactive discussions, with 3 separate working groups as follow:

- Developing **core H2020 indicators and data** (indicators in a regional context, H2020 set, additional aspects/indicators from NAP....) - moderated by Plan Bleu and regional thematic experts (Group 1)
- Ensuring appropriate data sharing processes and **infrastructure development** – in support of preparing the process for the regional assessment in synergy with relevant projects and activities - moderated by EEA and InfoRAC (Group 2).
- Building-up **assessments** – covering wide spectrum of envisaged national, regional and thematic assessment activities planned in the coming period – moderated by EEA (Group 3).

Key outcomes from group 1 are presented in the figure below:



Principal issues and required measures



Key outcomes from group 2

The working group on infrastructure and data management reflected country needs as regard data collection, processing of data and reporting.

Needs identified by the participants have been clustered in 3 main groups: human resources, hardware and software

Human resources:

- Trainings on quality control for the selected indicators together with written processes for QA/QC;

- Country visits as needed with IT experts;

- Organisation of continuous IT support (helpdesk) and provision of regular webinars (more efficient than having a dedicated specific IT group);

- Organisation of trainings with delivery of certificates to the participants;

- Capacity building for human resources to maintain databases;

- Specific training on data handling for indicator calculation (aggregation of data, downscaling for calculating indicators at higher spatial resolution from national to coastal for example, etc.).

Hardware:

- Develop data policy legislation to ensure data access;

- Support the preparation of memorandum of understanding for data access among the different institutional bodies;

- Ensure appropriate inter calibration and accreditation of laboratories to ensure quality of monitoring data;



Implement agreed international methodologies and standards to ensure data harmonisation;

Adopt international standards (metadata, data dictionary, XML format, data sharing process...);

Mandate national committee/team to validate and ensure quality of the data;

Develop interoperable data management systems ;

To ensure a sustainability include H2020 indicators within existing national list of indicators;

The Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) should be adopted to describe the process of production and validation of data;

Software:

Standards for metadata and data sharing should be adopted following the standard defined by ISO 19115, 10139 and the recommendations of W3C regarding XML files;

A certain flexibility should be guaranteed in using different standards for reporting;

MED POL info system should be used more intensively;

Interfaces should be made to allow the access to national and international databases.

The above inputs will be reflected and taken into account in the plan activities of the WP4 work plan.

Key outcomes from group 3

Building-up assessments require:

Common set of core indicator as a basis

Regional integration

Make use of all existing assessments work/efforts to feed specific H2020 assessment

multi purpose of indicators, analysis within specific context/policy demand

take into account timing of various planned report & assessments (feed each other, build competencies)

ensure links with SDGs

use of projects results to complement missing data/evidence - showcase

Regional to guide national contributions (incl. corresponding capacity building)

Include national level recommendations into regional assessment

SEIS window shop – contribute to show where investments and further development are needed

Platform for exchange of experiences/community of practices

Data bank of country needs (assessment skills) / capacities building opportunities



Day 3. Wednesday, 18 October 2017

Session 5. Regional plan of activities of the ENI SEIS South Support Mechanism in 2020 perspective

This session focused on the regional work plan of activities of the SEIS Support Mechanism project until 2020 with focus on 2018 activities.

The session started by a detailed presentation by each lead thematic experts of the thematic approach proposed and consecutive activities to be carried out.

On this basis and taking into account relevant aspects discussed/presented in the previous 2 sessions (progress and group discussions), a work plan for individual project work packages was presented and discussed.

Participants pointed out the tight deadlines/timetable and the large number of activities, underlining the need for enhanced capacity building especially in terms of thematic expertise to progress with data production and indicators development and on infrastructure development to support regular data flows at national level. In addition to the in-country support provided through the bilateral funding (SSFA), regional activities (workshops, technical assistance, study tours) will be adjusted to provide additional assistance to countries. More focus on convergence with other projects in the region were emphasized by some participants aiming at utilising the regional capacity in more effective way.

Session 6. Next steps

The agreed next steps were:

- refinement of the methodological specification of the indicators to integrate inputs from the metadata survey and consultation with countries;
- continuation of the thematic work with national experts on data production;
- regional workshop on indicator (tentatively planned in February) to finalise the indicators and launch the corresponding data collection and indicator testing;
- preparation of the next reporting exercise;
- operationalisation of the bilateral agreements.

More focus on supporting the establishment of national infrastructure and IT system was explicitly mentioned to secure dataflows for indicator development underpinning the upcoming assessments as well as strengthen the reporting obligations.

The next meeting of ENI SEIS II SM and H2020 RM group meeting is tentatively proposed to take place 6-7 November 2018 in Vienna, Austria. Possibility to hold it back to back with the UfM Working Group on Environment and Climate Change will be explored with UfM secretariat.

In the margins of the meeting (morning of 16 Oct and afternoon of 18 Oct), bilateral meetings between EEA-UNEP/MAP and the partner country representatives are being scheduled.



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



This project is funded by the European Union



European Environment Agency

