

TOWARDS A SHARED ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION SYSTEM (SEIS) IN THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD

ENPI-SEIS implementation of priority data flows
National workshop in Armenia, 30-31 January 2014

Statement of the meeting

Whereas:

The Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) is an EU initiative to modernise and simplify the collection, exchange and use of the data required for the design and implementation of environmental policy.

The ENPI-SEIS project was launched to help protect the environment in the European Neighbourhood regions by improving capacities of relevant national authorities in the domain of monitoring, data management and indicator-based reporting on the environment. The project aims to stimulate national authorities to find ways to build strong institutional and expert networks of data providers, managers and users. It also has the objective to enable development of a more efficient ways to collect and share environmental data and information.

The ENPI-SEIS project is implemented by the European Environment Agency, whose task is to provide sound, independent information on the environment. The agency through its partnership network Eionet (European Environment Information and Observation Network) brings together environmental information from individual countries concentrating on the delivery of timely, nationally validated, high-quality data. The ENPI-SEIS project builds on and promotes this experience in the Neighborhood region.

Recognising the active participation of Armenia's government authorities in the ENPI-SEIS project:

At the first national workshop of 6-7 April 2011 in Yerevan, the representatives from the Ministry for Nature Protection and the National Statistics Office of Armenia, as well as other representatives from national environmental authorities stressed the importance of the ENPI-SEIS project and the need for further expert support in implementing it at national level.

Throughout the project, Armenia actively participated in the project's activities, showing its commitment to contribute to the final results of the project. At the meeting of ENPI-SEIS East national focal points, 9-11 April 2013 in Copenhagen, the representatives of Armenia reiterated requests for further technical assistance and capacity building activities.

Desirous to further relationships with the neighbouring countries and to visibility in the international environmental information domain, build on the commitments that Armenia has already taken, **EEA and the Government of Armenia hereby agree** to work together in accordance with the SEIS principles. This implies to improve the access and availability of Armenia's data and environmental information at an international level through committing to:

Government of Armenia:

- 1) Endorse the implementation of SEIS principles at national level to improve the data exchange and visibility of environmental information in accordance with the EEA/Eionet data policy;

- 2) Ensure dissemination and access to environmental information, analysis and assessment to the public;
- 3) Recommend solutions enabling the implementation of developed legal basis, improvement of existing infrastructure and use of existing modern monitoring equipment;
- 4) Strengthen institutional cooperation by considering the roles of the Ministry of Environment Protection and the National Statistics Office of Georgia, in their capacity as the host organisations for National Focal Points of the ENPI-SEIS project. Provide support in designating a national coordination structure and establishing an inter-agency and inter-sectorial working group for coordinating SEIS related activities at national level;
- 5) Undertake practical steps for the exchange of environmental information underpinning the initial set of environmental indicators selected within the ENPI-SEIS project and agreed to by the UNECE Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators ;
- 6) Ensure the sustainability of data flows in support of a regular assessment and reporting process based on the SEIS principles, as defined by the 2011 Astana Ministerial Declaration and to feed into the Pan-European assessment of assessments before the Ministerial conference preliminarily scheduled for 2016.

The European Environment Agency, in the framework of the ENPI-SEIS project:

- 1) Provide support and expertise via technical assistance and capacity building activities covering specific thematic areas and responding to specific needs, in particular the use of common standards for the data management and production of indicators;
- 2) Improve cooperation, by organising targeted events and/or invite national representatives to gain experience and best practice from the Eionet, understanding of its data reporting mechanisms and tools, working towards a regular process of indicator production and assessment;
- 3) Make available the suite of tools used by EEA member and collaborating countries, and facilitate usage for the Government of Armenia;
- 4) Create synergies with other relevant EU projects and similar international initiatives, and facilitate the participation/engagement of national authorities in them;
- 5) Investigate ways on how to involve national authorities in other activities of the EEA related to the sharing of environmental information, such as Copernicus, INSPIRE, etc.