

## Project: Improved environmental monitoring and assessment in support of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in South-Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus

**Start date:** January 2018

**End date:** December 2021

<b>Target countries:</b>	Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan
<b>Executing Entity:</b>	UNECE
<b>Co-operating Entities within the UN system</b>	UNEP
<b>Other partners</b>	European Environment Agency (EEA) and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), UNDP/United Nations Country Teams

### Project Summary

Led by the UNECE and implemented together with UNEP, the project aims to strengthen the national capacities of seven target countries: Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The target countries have requested support to improve environmental monitoring and assessment for the 2030 Agenda, highlighting in particular the need to enhance the comparability of environmental statistics in the region.

The project will focus on the following expected accomplishments:

- EA1: Strengthened capacities of national environmental authorities and statistical agencies to collect and produce required data and application of environmental indicators in accordance with the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) principles and practices.
- EA2: Improved accessibility and use of regularly updated and high quality environmental indicators, within the framework of SEIS, to respond to international indicator-based reporting obligations, including monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) aims to facilitate regular environmental assessments and reporting on progress on multilateral environmental agreements and towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Through information and communication technologies (ICTs), the project aims to improve national capacities to produce, track and share environmental information and data. This objective has been mandated by Ministers of the Environment through the Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, and by the Committee on Environmental Policy in the recent call to establish SEIS in Europe and Central Asia by 2021.

The project will serve multiple policy purposes, including reporting under multilateral environmental agreements and, more importantly for this project, contribute towards monitoring of progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The key stakeholders from the countries will be the policymakers responsible for reporting on progress on the 2030 Agenda (environment related ministries) and for the establishment of SEIS. While national governments are the only entities with the responsibility and authority to collect and publicly report on the state-of-the-environment, there is a lack of adequate knowledge and experience at the expert level in collection of data and monitoring of the environment. UNECE and UNEP will continue to support the enhancement of national capacities to better track, produce and share environmental information and data as well as to support the development of capacities to report on progress towards the 2030 Agenda.

The project will also help target countries to identify best practices, measures and procedures to prepare a reporting mechanism on progresses towards the 2030 Agenda, with a focus on the crosscutting nature of SEIS.

Project activities will be integrated into United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks in beneficiary countries. United Nations Country Teams will support the organization of national and regional training and capacity-development workshops and will support the dissemination of the project results.

### Planned project activities

- A1.1 Development of seven gap analysis reviews (one per country) on SEIS establishment, environmental data and information to cover the production of regional/international environmental indicators (UNECE set of environmental indicators, EEA core set of indicators, OECD green growth indicators, and indicators for the SDGs) and development of national workplans or roadmaps for enhancing national SEIS establishment. The gap analyses will also review the use of environmental data and information in decision-making processes and communication;
- A1.3. Implementation of seven national training sessions to provide guidance on how to streamline the production of regionally and internationally agreed environmental data flows and indicators in a manner coherent with the principles of SEIS for indicator-based assessments and reporting and to finalize the national work plan or roadmap developed for enhancing SEIS establishment; Training material will be prepared by UNECE and UNEP (Activity 1.2.)
- A1.4. Advisory missions by UNEP and UNECE to the target countries to support in regular environmental monitoring and assessment as part of preparing national roadmaps to monitor the SDGs;
- A2.1. Implementation of seven national capacity-building workshops to improve the institutional knowledge base for data collection standards and the use of monitoring and assessment tools for regular indicator-based assessments to measure progress towards the environment-related SDGs (in cooperation with UNCTs);
- A2.2. Conduct two regional capacity-building workshops on (with participation of the seven target countries):
  - Reviewing the use, harmonisation and streamlining of indicator-related methodologies, data collection and quality assurance and quality control aspects of environmental data and indicators for national and international reporting obligations;
  - New and existing state-of-the-art indicator frameworks for monitoring the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda at the national level, and activities to support its implementation, including the establishment of reporting mechanisms and procedures for the methodological review of SDG indicators;

Both regional workshops will increase the visibility of the project, facilitate increased cooperation between relevant agencies and provide a forum to exchange knowledge (e.g. showcasing success-stories) for the pan-European region as a whole.

### Other relevant project activities

- A2.3. Development of guidelines on addressing specific human and institutional capacity needs as regards to monitoring progress towards the SDGs. The publications would be based on the training materials developed for the project, to be made available for future regional and national projects, including lessons learnt from the process as well as a discussion of remaining challenges in the region.
- A2.4. Development of a SEIS e-learning platform where relevant publications and training materials produced in the framework of this project and other initiatives (e.g. 10th Tranche Programme on Data and Statistics) are shared.