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**LESSONS LEARNED FROM DATA COLLECTION
FOR THE KIEV REPORT**

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LESSONS LEARNED FROM DATA COLLECTION FOR THE KIEV REPORT¹

I. DATA COLLECTION FOR THE KIEV REPORT

1. At their previous conference “Environment for Europe” in Aarhus, Denmark, in 1998, the European Ministers for the Environment requested the European Environment Agency (EEA) to prepare for their next meeting in Kiev an indicator-based report on progress in environmental management in Europe - the Kiev report - in coordination with other international organizations. The report has been developed with the support of the UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring. It covers the European UNECE region (Europe, the whole of the Russian Federation, the Caucasus and Central Asia) and focuses on the implementation of international conventions and on progress in environmental management.

2. To make the data collection for the Kiev report as transparent and coherent as possible, a working document “Guidelines for the data collection of the Kiev report” was produced. It

¹ Prepared by the European Environment Agency in consultation with the UNECE secretariat and approved by the UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring.

contained a description of the information required for the production of the indicators of the Kiev report.

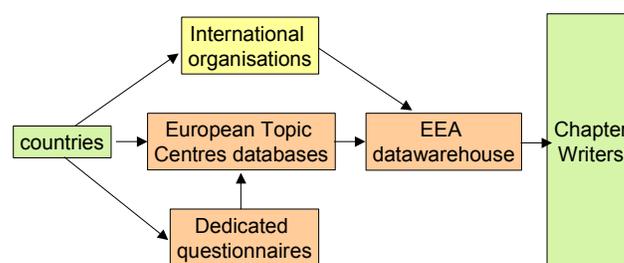
3. The main principle for the data collection for the Kiev report was to avoid any unnecessary burden on the countries. As much as possible EEA used data from international databases. To collect data not available in international databases for non-EEA member countries, three questionnaires on soil, waste and water were developed. These covered the following key topics: land cover related to soil sealing, soil degradation, soil contamination, waste generation and treatment, waste-treatment facilities, water resources and water quality, including marine waters.

4. The water questionnaire was very extensive, because it was expected to fit into a wider project, namely to extend EUROWATERNET (the EEA's system of data collection on water) to non-EEA member countries. This inland surface water monitoring project is now being implemented.

5. Countries that are not members of EEA and the new Mediterranean EEA countries completed the questionnaires. It concerned 22 countries (2 non-EEA West European countries, 3 new Mediterranean EEA countries, 5 Balkan countries and the 12 countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA). The questionnaire was officially launched in January 2002 in English and in March 2002 in Russian. Data collection for the Kiev report was completed in September 2002.

6. The role of the EEA national focal points (NFPs) and national contact points for the Kiev report (NCPs) was to distribute the questionnaires to the persons or institutions responsible for national data collection or able to provide the data requested. NFPs and NCPs motivated national participation in the Kiev reporting process, encouraged national institutes to provide related information and gathered the completed questionnaires and other material, and returned them in due time.

Dataflows for the Kiev report



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Kiev

European Environment Agency 

7. Support to the countries for the data collection was part of the European Union (EU) CARDS funding for the South Eastern European countries (Albania and Serbia and Montenegro not included) and the EU TACIS funding for EECCA. Consultants were contracted by EEA to help countries with data collection (assistance in the completion of the questionnaires) and data processing (data validation, quality control). Kick-off meetings and country missions were organized to give guidance and reference in the data collection.

8. Data have been processed by the European topic centres of EEA to support the writing of the assessment. All data collected have been stored in a data warehouse, a database at EEA that is able to capture data from various sources and that has been used by the authors and all those involved in the production of the Kiev report. They could download the data from the data warehouse to create indicators and support their assessments.

II. COUNTRY EXPERIENCES DURING THE DATA COLLECTION FOR THE KIEV REPORT

A. Networking

9. In comparison with the first pan-European state-of-the-environment reports (Europe's Environment - The Dobris Assessment and the Second Assessment), the strength of the Kiev report lies, in particular, in the more structured and systematic involvement of public authorities in countries which are not members of EEA. It has now been possible to work with a longer-term vision in mind.

10. Most of the countries were fully aware of the “Environment for Europe” process and the preparation of the Kiev report for the next Ministerial Conference. The working relationships with the countries and other relevant national institutions were good. On incidental requests from EEA, high-level officials were very supportive when there were procedural problems (e.g. clarification of competences, nomination of national institutions for the data collection). The framework for

cooperation between countries as provided by the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring was very appropriate, for the EECCA in particular, in the way it provided NFPs and NCPs at a technical level, which are essential for good implementation and high quality.

11. In some cases the data collection process was hindered by unclear responsibilities especially at the national expert level (institutions that were responsible for the national data collection). Legal mandates were sometimes requested. Other countries were in an organizational restructuring phase (e.g. Armenia, Malta, Serbia and Montenegro), which did not facilitate data collection.

12. For producing a proper analysis of the state of the environment, information on many factors influencing the environment is needed. This was reflected in the data requests in the questionnaires, and data were to be retrieved from a number of different government entities. Some countries noted it as a problem that the scope of information requested was beyond the competence of Ministries of the Environment. Communication with other ministries was sometimes poor. Some country representatives did not have the authority to require such data as requested by the Kiev questionnaires. The most serious case was for the water questionnaire (e.g. Croatia, Russian Federation, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), which revealed that cooperation and data exchange between government entities dealing with water needed improving in several countries.

B. Data availability

13. In EECCA, due to economic difficulties, the number of stations measuring aspects of the quality of the environment has been severely reduced compared with the beginning of the 1990s.

14. In some countries very limited or no monitoring has been performed due to war situations, and in some cases all information regarding previous years has been lost.

15. In most countries, however, there is a substantial amount of data available. Unfortunately, as mentioned above, there is often little or no coordination between the organizations involved in environmental data collection. Some NFPs or NCPs do not have the complete overview of data available in their countries. Work on a catalogue of data sources would be a first priority, which would also benefit national state-of-the-environment reporting.

16. The data collection process was further burdened by the lack of an appropriately organized national reporting process. Some countries still follow obsolete monitoring and calculation methods, which are not harmonized with evolving international methodologies and create problems of comparability.

17. Country representatives highlighted technical problems such as the lack of a technical base for an effective operation (e.g. computer hardware, IT support, many data not digitally available or accessible on the Internet). For those countries, the preparation for the pan-European process and efficient future participation depends on the building of national capacities and the provision of minimum technical and financial assistance to the relevant institutions.

18. The biggest gaps in data availability, as revealed by the Kiev reporting process, are related to urban air pollution, soil contamination, soil remediation, waste management systems including hazardous waste, water quality, waste-water treatment and discharge to water and hazardous substances. However, soil erosion, soil sealing, and water quantity and use are well covered.
19. Urban air quality monitoring coverage and data availability are still poor in some countries due to a lack of monitoring data. As air pollution in relation to human health is amongst the most serious environmental problems faced by EECCA cities, efforts should be made to improve urban air quality monitoring in EECCA in the framework of the “Environment for Europe” process in general.
20. Air emissions are not properly inventoried in many countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia and several countries of Central Europe. Actions are needed to improve their emission inventories.
21. Concerning soil, the biggest gap is related to soil contamination. Although gradually more data on the number of contaminated sites have become available, the analysis is hampered by the lack of comparability and information on progress in and costs of remediation. Information on the extension of soil erosion, especially agricultural land affected by erosion, is available (most countries have data for the past 10 years). Although data on the amount of soil lost by erosion is available for 60% of the countries, units are not homogenous, making comparisons difficult. The most complete data set concerns land use, with time series covering the past 10 years.
22. Although data on the generation and management of waste categories and total waste generated were generally accessible, data quality was not good enough for analysis in all countries. In several countries, hazardous waste data are unreliable because of inaccurate inventories and different classification systems. Waste classifications need to be harmonized to improve the situation.
23. Water quantity and water use data were mostly available. There is a general lack of environmental monitoring and comparable data and information on the state of waters in EECCA (rivers, lakes, groundwater and coastal waters). National surface-water monitoring systems are not coherent, as neither the data reporting systems nor the methodologies are harmonized.
24. Long-term and systematic monitoring of concentrations of hazardous substances in ecosystems, food and human tissues is scarce in all European countries.
25. A large amount of scientific and inventory work has been done and is very developed for monitoring nature and biodiversity. Large parts of Europe are covered by inventories of sites, birds and mammals. However, much of this work lacks a proper focus to make it relevant for the analysis of policies.
26. Significant gaps in country coverage also occur, as revealed by the submission of data from international databases. A number of UNECE countries, although members of relevant international

organizations and Parties to international conventions, do not submit data or their submissions are either incomplete or do not cover the agreed time intervals.

C. Data processing

27. The main problem encountered was the different approaches, concepts and methodologies used by the countries (e.g. waste classifications, air quality measuring methods). What has been learned is that much work needs to be done to arrive at a common understanding of terminology and definitions. The multilingual environmental thesaurus developed by EEA can support future collaborative activities.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING CAPACITIES IN EUROPE

28. Knowledge on the developments in the whole UNECE region for supporting policy processes with environmental information will increasingly be necessary. Providing the basis for a phase of “learning lessons”, the Kiev report marks the start of a new phase of cooperation in environmental monitoring and reporting in Europe. This new phase is characterized by more systematic approaches, a policy focus and a clearer organizational structure to support long-term partnerships. This should help link these countries to the necessary support funding, in particular that from the European Community’s Tacis programme. From the start of its activities, the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring was involved in articulating the contents of the Kiev report to make it relevant to policies and to include the proper analyses. Immediately afterwards the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring became involved in the necessary data flows and information processing. Such an activity is important to establish an effective bridge between a responsive monitoring system and a relevant reporting process in support of policy-making. Recommendations to allow for a real pan-European monitoring and reporting process are listed below.

Recommendation 1: Maintain the pan-European framework for cooperation on environmental reporting and information management among countries

29. At the regional level further development of the cooperation framework provided by the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring, will be required. This work should be adequately backed up by the political level and supported by the necessary funding.

Recommendation 2: Ensure an appropriate level of investment in basic environmental monitoring infrastructure

30. A higher level of investment, in particular in EECCA, will be required on the national level. Investments into raw data collection (networks), processing capacities (human resources) and equipment (computer hardware and software) are needed in a number of UNECE countries in the areas of air quality, water quality, waste management, biodiversity, and chemicals in ecosystems and foodstuffs.

Recommendation 3: Establish mechanisms for the provision of environmental information by countries, in particular in EECCA

31. These mechanisms are defined as “integrated, coherent monitoring, collection, assessment and dissemination systems for providing environmental data and information”. Substantial efforts are still needed in many countries of EECCA to develop proper national networks. The experience of the European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET) developed by EEA should be taken fully into account for improving the capacity of the various national institutes to provide environmental information.

32. The Working Group on Environmental Monitoring has prepared a set of Recommendations on Strengthening National Environmental Monitoring and Information Systems in EECCA (ECE/CEP/109) as well as Guidelines on the Preparation of Governmental Reports on the State and Protection of the Environment in these countries (ECE/CEP/113). These documents will also support also the national implementation of the principles of the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.

Recommendation 4: Encourage international collaboration to improve international comparability of environmental information

33. Priority areas are air emissions, urban air quality, transboundary inland water pollution, marine pollution, hazardous waste, waste management, and biodiversity.

Recommendation 5: Urge UNECE countries to ensure the submission of environmental data to international organizations and governing bodies of conventions according to their international commitments, if they are not already doing so

34. Specific efforts are required under relevant international organizations and conventions to cover existing data gaps. This would improve their compliance and reporting systems and would facilitate data collection for future pan-European environmental assessments.

Recommendation 6: Explore practical possibilities for using information from “remote sensing” for national and regional environmental assessments

35. Remote sensing is a unique instrument to complement existing ground-based monitoring systems. User-driven applications and indicators will need to be developed to use the available technology optimally.

Annex**RESULTS OF THE DATA COLLECTION FOR THE KIEV REPORT***Criteria for scoring*

Questionnaire	Scoring criteria based on questionnaire returned and completed (completeness of requested information on soil, waste and water and time series)
😊😊😊	Questionnaire with complete time series made available
😊😊	Questionnaire with only minor gaps in time series made available
😊	Questionnaire with some major gaps in time series made available and/or delay not more than 2 weeks
😞	No/or blank questionnaire returned and/or delay more than 1 month

Country	Soil questionnaire	Water questionnaire	Waste questionnaire	Remarks
Albania	😊	😞	😊	No consultant support by CARDS funding
Armenia	😊	😊😊	😞	Due to the reorganization of the Ministry of Environment, little data available
Azerbaijan	😊😊	😊😊	😊	Questionnaires were returned with minor gaps (soil and water)
Belarus	😊	😊	😊😊	Strong network of national institutions collecting environmental data
Bosnia and Herzegovina	😊	😊	😊	The war resulted in major information disruption. However, questionnaires contain the limited data available and were delivered on time
Croatia	😊😊	😊	😊	Significant environmental data available
Cyprus	😊	😞	😊	Late delivery of the water questionnaire
Georgia	😊	😊	😊	Delivery of additional information (e.g. UNSD Questionnaire 2001 on Environmental Statistics)
Kazakhstan	😊	😊	😊	Major gaps parameter-wise and time-wise, very poor waste statistics
Kyrgyzstan	😊😊	😊😊	😊	Partial mismatch of definitions, lack of comparable statistics (e.g. waste, soil loss, contaminated sites), no long-time series (waste)

Malta	😊	😊	😊	Very late delivery of the Kiev questionnaires; inclusion of data from Malta in the Kiev report uncertain
Monaco	n/a	😊	😊😊	Soil questionnaire not relevant for Monaco
Republic of Moldova	😊	😊	😊	Most of data submitted in a format that does not meet EEA requirements. Had to be supplemented by additional data
Russian Federation	😊/😊	😊	😊/😊	Very late delivery of data on waste and soil
Serbia and Montenegro	😊	😊	😊	No consultant support by CARDS funding. Use of additional information (UNSD Questionnaire 2001 on Environmental Statistics)
Switzerland	😊	😊	😊😊	Delivery of additional information for water (OECD questionnaire 2002)
Tajikistan	😊	😊	😊	No data on contaminated sites, limited time series, very limited water information, few waste variables are monitored
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	😊	😊	😊	Questionnaires were submitted on time and with available data - the grading reflects problems of time series information
Turkey	😊	😊	😊	Limited waste and water information
Turkmenistan	😊	😊	😊	Little data on contaminated sites and soil loss, very scarce waste statistics, relatively complete water information given the overall data situation, delayed delivery due to the national focal point's reorganization
Ukraine	😊	😊	😊	Most of data submitted in a format that does not meet EEA requirements. Had to be supplemented by additional data
Uzbekistan	😊😊	😊😊	😊😊	No data on soil losses, different classification for hazardous waste