

PROJECT DOCUMENT

Project Title	Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA)
Project ID:	ECE-E280
Project Manager	Filip Aggestam
Subprogramme	Environment
Implementing Entity	UNECE
Start Date	1 January 2017
End Date	31 December 2021 <i>30/12/2020, Umoja did not allow a 2021 end date.</i>
Budget	US\$ 1.3 million
Beneficiary Countries	All ECE Member Countries
Cooperating Entities within the UN System	UNDP, UNEP/WCMC, WHO/ROE, UNSD
Other Implementing Partners	EC, EEA, IUCN, OECD, WMO

1 BACKGROUND

(a) Context and background

The Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA) was originally established by the Committee on Environmental Policy in 2000 as the Ad Hoc Working Group on Environmental Monitoring. The body serve all the ECE member States as a platform to exchange good practice and information, develop action plans and strengthen initiatives in the area of environmental monitoring and related areas with a view to supporting environmental decision-making. The Working Group obtained its current name in 2003 when its mandate was expanded to cover environmental assessment and, in particular, helping to streamline international environmental reporting in the pan-European region.

The Working Group was mandated in 2007 to assist countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and interested countries of South-Eastern Europe (the target countries) to make monitoring and assessment an effective instrument for environmental policymaking, and to improve international environmental reporting. This assistance was further expanded, by later mandates, to supporting the efforts of the target countries in establishing SEIS to underpin regular reporting and assessments in accordance with the requirements and obligations under relevant multilateral environmental agreements.

Between 2007 and 2014 the Working Group focused on delivery of the mandated assistance to its target countries. It also continued to contribute to an appraisal of monitoring and assessment requirements within the framework of the Environment for Europe process and other relevant processes. In 2014, the Committee specifically mandated the Working Group to support the establishment of the pan-European SEIS and added the task of reviewing SEIS progress. From the onset, the Working Group was created mainly to serve the national institutions from all ECE member States dealing with environmental monitoring and assessment (environmental agencies or ministries), but was not limited to the participation of experts from these institutions.

The work carried out by the Working Group in 2015 and 2016 focused on preparing the first report on

progress in establishing SEIS in support of regular reporting in the pan-European region (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/8) and the European regional assessment of the Sixth Global Environmental Outlook (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/INF/14) together with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). This culminated in the launch of these reports during the Batumi Conference. On the basis of the progress report ministers welcomed progress in developing SEIS and invited countries to further develop their national information systems to have SEIS in place in the countries of Europe and Central Asia by 2021 (see ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/2/Add.1).

The secretariat for the Working Group is provided by UNECE. However, the operational budget for the activities carried out under the Programme on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment is completely extra-budgetary. Funds are provided by donors directly to the Programme's Trust Fund or through in kind contributions.

(b) Mandates, comparative advantage and link to the Programme Budget

The Working Group is part of the approved programme of work of subprogramme 1, Environment, covering the 2017-2021 period (ECE/CEP/2017/2).

The Working Group contributes to achieving the expected accomplishments (c) "Strengthened national capacity for environmental monitoring and assessment systems in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe" of the Proposed Strategic Framework 2018-2019, of the Subprogramme 1 "Environment". The Working Group continues to produce guidelines related to environmental monitoring and assessment.

(c) Country demand and target countries

The target countries include all ECE member States. Countries have requested support, most recently during the eighteenth session of the Working Group (28-29 June, 2016, Geneva), to improve environmental monitoring and assessment, especially noting the need to enhance the comparability of environmental statistics. This request was emphasized within the scope of producing and sharing environmental indicators under a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) (ECE/CEP/AC.10/2016/2).

The demand from the target countries follows the UNECE work on closing national capacity gaps as regards to environmental monitoring and assessment and the establishment of a regular process of environmental assessments and the development of SEIS (ECE/ASTANA.CONF/2011/2/Add.1). At the Eight Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference, Ministers of the Environment renewed the commitment to establish SEIS in Europe and Central Asia by 2021 (ECE/BATUMI.CONF/2016/2/Add.1, para. 14).

(d) Duration of the project

It is foreseen that this project will continue until 2021 when its current mandate will need to be renewed.

2 Relationship to the Strategic Framework and the Sustainable Development Goals

The activities of the Working Group are cross-cutting and would contribute to several aspects of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The work is principally oriented towards improving environmental data collection, strengthening environmental reporting and national assessments, as well as promoting comparability of environmental datasets and indicators in line with the UNECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators.¹

The Working Group will contribute directly to:

- **SDG 6** (Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all);
- **SDG 7** (Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all);
- **SDG 12** (Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns);
- **SDG 13** (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts) and
- **SDG 17** (Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development).

It should be noted that the harmonization and streamlining of monitoring and reporting efforts would not be restricted to five SDGs but would improve monitoring capabilities in the target countries as a whole. It will advance monitoring systems, as a central component of reporting on progress towards the SDGs and the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

3 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: Regularly updated and high quality environmental indicators, within the framework of SEIS and the UNECE set of environmental indicators, for international indicator-based reporting obligations, including progress towards monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals.

4 Indicators of achievement

IA1.1: All UNECE core environmental indicators, as agreed and defined by the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators, in accordance with the UNECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators, have been produced by the target countries.

IA1.2: All target countries have improved their performance score, in accordance with the UNECE targets and performance indicators for measuring progress in developing a SEIS, including the online accessibility and quality of core environmental indicators, in line with the UNECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators.

IA2.1: All target countries have improved the online accessibility and quality of core environmental indicators in line with the UNECE Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators and the performance indicators for measuring progress in developing a SEIS.

¹ See http://www.unece.org/env/europe/monitoring/landR_en.html

5 Main activities

A1.1 Develop joint UNECE and UNEP guidelines and training materials on the production of regional/international environmental indicators as well as addressing specific human and institutional capacity needs as regards to monitoring progress towards the SDGs.

A1.2 Conduct capacity-building workshops 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. Workshops would also be carried out 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.

A2.1 Organize the annual sessions of the Working Group to provide guidance on the use, harmonization 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;

6 Assumptions and Risks

Assumptions, the conditions that must exist for the project to succeed, but are beyond the control of project management, include:

- a) **Political stability:** The UNECE region remains politically stable as a prerequisite for continued implementation of the activities of the Working Group;
- b) **Commitment:** member State Governments remain committed to the activities of the Working Group.

Risks for the delivery of activities and for the achievement of expected accomplishments include:

- a) **Lacking or limited funds:** Donor countries are not interested in the Working Group. The secretariat works with UNEP and EEA – as part of its common approach – to promote the provision of adequate financial and in-kind resources to support the implementation of the work programme.
- b) **Cancelation or postponing of the Workshops:** The workshops are canceled due to lacking country interest and/or the availability of funds to organize the workshops.
- c) **Cancelation or postponing of the Working Group Sessions:** Weakened country interest in and commitment to engage in the Working Group. The secretariat will work with UNEP, EEA and OECD to maintain interest in and commitment to the Working Group and activities set out in its work plans;

7 Results-based work plan

EA	Activity	Timeframe by activity		Budget class and Code	Amount (USD)
		Year	Quarter		
EA1:Strengthened capacities of national environmental authorities and statistical agencies [...]	A1.1. Guidelines and training materials	Y1, Y2, Y3, Y4, Y5	Q4	Staff and personnel costs (GTA)	\$ 100,000
	A1.2. Capacity-building workshops on SEIS	Y2, Y3, Y4, Y5	Q2	Staff and personnel costs (GTA)	\$ 120,000
				Travel of staff	\$ 20,000
				Contractual Services	\$ 140,000
				Operating and other direct costs	\$ 80,000
				Travel	\$ 208,000
Sub-total	\$ 668,000				
EA2: Regularly updated and high quality environmental indicators [...]	A2.1 Working Group Sessions	Y1: 19th Session of the WGEMA	Q3	Staff and personnel costs (GTA)	\$ 16,000
				Contractual Services	\$ 5000
				Operating and other direct costs	\$ 5000
				Travel	\$ 65,000
		Y2: 20th Session of the WGEMA	Q3	Staff and personnel costs (GTA)	\$ 16,000
				Contractual Services	\$ 5000
				Operating and other direct costs	\$ 5000
				Travel	\$ 65,000
		Y3: 21st Session of the WGEMA	Q3	Staff and personnel costs (GTA)	\$ 16,000
				Contractual Services	\$ 5000
				Operating and other direct costs	\$ 5000
				Travel	\$ 65,000
		Y4: 22nd Session of the WGEMA	Q3	Staff and personnel costs (GTA)	\$ 16,000
				Contractual Services	\$ 5000
				Operating and other direct costs	\$ 5000
				Travel	\$ 65,000
		Y5: 23rd Session of the WGEMA	Q3	Staff and personnel costs (GTA)	\$ 16,000
				Contractual Services	\$ 5000
				Operating and other direct costs	\$ 5000
				Travel	\$ 65,000
Sub-total	\$ 455,000				
Evaluation				Consultant	\$ 22,000
Total direct expenditures					\$ 1,145,000
13% Programme Support Costs					\$ 148,850
Total					\$ 1,293,850

8 Budget

Staff and personnel costs (010) \$ 184,000 (Total)

Temporary assistance to perform the tasks of producing guidelines, training materials, conducting capacity building workshops and WGEMA meeting support in support of activities:

A1.1 (5 work months) x (\$ 8000 per work month) = \$ 40,000.

A1.2. (8 work months) x (\$ 8000 per work month) = \$ 64,000.

A2.1. (10 work months) x (\$ 8000 per work month) = \$ 80,000.

Consultants (010): \$ 116,000 (Total)

International consultants

International consultants for the task(s) of producing guidelines, training materials, conducting capacity building workshops and WGEMA meeting support, in support of activities:

A1.1 (10 work months) x (\$ 6000 per work month) = \$ 60,000.

National / Regional consultants

National consultants for the task of conducting capacity building workshops, in support of activities:

A1.2. (8 work months) x (\$ 5000 per work month) = \$ 40,000

Consultant travel

4 missions by consultants for the purpose of support for capacity building workshops, in support of activities:

A1.2 (4 missions for 2 consultants) (\$2,000 average mission cost) x (total of 8 missions) = \$ 16,000.

Travel of Staff (160): \$ 20,000 (Total)

4 missions by UN staff for the purpose of support for capacity building workshops, in support of activities A1.2 (4 missions for 2 staff members) (\$2,500 average mission cost) x (total of 8 missions) = \$ 20,000.

Contractual services (120): \$ 165,000 (Total)

A provision of \$ 165,000 is required for costs of external translation of documents and workshop materials (e.g. editing, design and layout), including external printing of publications, in support of activities:

A1.2: translation of documents and workshop materials for 4 capacity-building workshops, including support from individual contractors = \$ 140,000

A2.1: production of materials for 5 WGEMA sessions = \$ 25,000.

Operating and other direct cost expenses (125): \$ 125,000 (Total)

Interpretation and translation cost required in the field missions or during the conference/ workshop/ seminar where simultaneous interpretation is required and renting cost for rooms for workshops in target countries, in support of activities:

A1.2 and A2.1 = \$ 125,000

Travel of meeting participants (seminars, workshops, seminars) (160): \$ 533,000 (Total)

Workshops & seminars

In support of activity A1.2: Capacity-building workshops (2 day x \$300 per participant) x (\$2000 per ticket) x (20 participants) x (4 workshops) = \$208,000;

In support of activity A2.1. WGEMA meetings (2 days x \$300 per participant) x (\$2000 per ticket) x (25 participants) x (5 meetings) = \$325,000.

Total direct cost	\$ 1,145,000
2% for evaluation	\$ 22,000
13% UN Programme Support Cost	\$ 148,850
Total budget	\$ 1,293,850