

REGIONAL REPORT ON OUTPUT 2.5: MAINTAINING INTERNATIONAL SHARING OF DATA AND NETWORKING

PUBLIC REPORT



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EU4Environment
Water and Data in Eastern Partner Countries

EU4Environment in Eastern Partner Countries:
Water Resources and Environmental Data (ENI/2021/425-550)

ABOUT THIS REPORT

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ABOUT EU4ENVIRONMENT – WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

This Programme aims at improving people's wellbeing in EU's Eastern Partner Countries and enabling their green transformation in line with the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The programme's activities are clustered around two specific objectives: 1) support a more sustainable use of water resources and 2) improve the use of sound environmental data and their availability for policy-makers and citizens. It ensures continuity of the Shared Environmental Information System Phase II and the EU Water Initiative Plus for Eastern Partnership programmes.

The Programme is implemented by five Partner organisations: Environment Agency Austria (UBA), Austrian Development Agency (ADA), International Office for Water (OiEau) (France), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The action is co-funded by the European Union, the Austrian Development Cooperation and the French Artois-Picardie Water Agency based on a budget of EUR 12,75 million (EUR 12 million EU contribution). The implementation period is 2021-2024.

<https://eu4waterdata.eu>

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List of abbreviations

Copernicus.....	Earth observation component of the EU Space programme
CORINE	Coordination of Information on the Environment
DG DEFIS.....	EC Directorate-General for Defense Industry and Space
DG ENV	EC Directorate-General for Environment of the European Commission
DG NEAR.....	(then) EC Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EC.....	European Commission
EEA.....	European Environment Agency
Eionet.....	Environmental Monitoring and Observation Network
SEIS	Shared Environmental Information System
ENI SEIS East	previous EEA project(s) with EaP countries
EU	European Union
HRL.....	High-Resolution Layer (Copernicus Programme)
HRVPP.....	High Resolution Vegetation Phenology and Productivity
JTFESI.....	Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators
MEA(s)	Multilateral Environmental Agreement(s)
NPD.....	National Policy Dialogue
SDG(s)	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
UNEP.....	United Nations Environment Programme
UNECE.....	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
WGEMA.....	UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment

1. Introduction

The EU4Environment Water and Data Programme aimed to maintain and strengthen the level of engagement in data sharing co-operation with regional/international organisations (esp. European Environment Agency and UNECE) and in multilateral environmental agreements. Three Activities have been outlined and their goals and implementation re-checked in policy-level dialogues with the beneficiaries in all EaP countries to identify interests and key development issues.

- Activity 2.5.1: Reviewing status and gaps of **international reporting obligations**
- Activity 2.5.2: Enhance **co-operation of EEA/Eionet and UNECE with EaP countries** on environmental monitoring and assessment
- Activity 2.5.3: Support **SEIS implementation and SDG monitoring** in the EaP countries

During the Inception Phase of the Programme the following status as regards international sharing of data and international co-operation and networking was assessed.

Armenia

Armenia is an active partner of the international community and Party to several Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) with resulting regular reporting obligations. Armenia has also actively co-operated in all thematic areas with the European Environment Agency under the previous ENI SEIS East project. It also participates in the UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA) and in the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators (JTFESI). Armenia has continuously increased its SEIS performance over the past years, gaps remain however that need to be closed. Information on environmental indicators and SDG indicators is made available under <https://www.armstat.am/en/?nid=12&thid=agr&type=0&submit=Search>.

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan is an active partner of the international community and Party to several MEAs with resulting regular reporting obligations. Azerbaijan has also actively co-operated in all thematic areas with the European Environment Agency under the previous ENI SEIS East project, and participates in the UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA) and the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators (JTFESI). Azerbaijan has continuously increased its SEIS performance over the past years, gaps remain however that need to be closed. Information on environmental indicators and SDG indicators is made available under <https://www.stat.gov.az/?lang=en>.

Georgia

Georgia is an active partner of the international community and Party to several MEAs with resulting regular reporting. It has also actively co-operated in all thematic areas with the European Environment Agency under the previous ENI SEIS East project, and Georgia is chairing since 2021 the UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA) and actively participates in the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators. Georgia has continuously increased its SEIS

performance over the past years, gaps remain however that need to be closed. Information on environmental indicators and SDG indicators is made available at <https://www.geostat.ge/en>.

Moldova

Moldova is an active partner of the international community and Party to several MEAs with resulting regular reporting. Moldova has also actively co-operated in all thematic areas with the European Environment Agency under the previous ENI SEIS East project, and participates in the UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA) and the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators (JTFESI). Moldova has continuously increased its SEIS performance over the past years, gaps remain however that need to be closed. Information on environmental indicators and SDG indicators is made available at <https://statistica.gov.md/index.php?l=en>.

Ukraine

Ukraine is an active partner of the international community and Party to several MEAs with resulting regular reporting. It has also actively co-operated in all thematic areas with the European Environment Agency under the previous ENI SEIS East project, and participates in the UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA) and the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators (JTFESI) where Ukraine is holding the function of the vice-chair. Ukraine has continuously increased its SEIS performance over the past years, gaps remain however that need to be closed. Information on environmental indicators and SDG indicators is made available at <https://ukrstat.gov.ua/>.

Taking into account specific requirements in the countries, the following activities were agreed in 2022.

Activity 2.5.1: Reviewing status and gaps of international reporting obligations

- Baseline report 2022
- Capacity-building actions in improvement areas
- Progress analysis 2024

Activity 2.5.2: Enhance co-operation of EEA/Eionet and UNECE with EaP countries on environmental monitoring and assessment

- Develop/negotiate and introduce suitable model for cooperation with EEA/Eionet (European Environment Information and Observation Network)
- Support regular participation in the activities of the UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA) and the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators (JTFESI)
- Contribute to the OECD Environment at a Glance platform (environmental and green growth indicators).

Activity 2.5.3: Support SEIS implementation and SDG monitoring in the EaP countries

- Train activities on a revised set of UNECE indicators

- Support annual thematic SEIS reporting with a focus selected by UNECE WGEMA (“air” proposed for 2023)
- Analyse and support SDG indicator reporting with priority on action focus themes (water, air, waste).

Since UBA and UNECE worked in partnership on Output 2.5: this report focuses on those parts with UBA or joint activities. For UNECE activities please see the parts related to 2.5 in the FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT BY UNECE UNDER CONTRACT ENI/2021/428-281 (1st January 2022 - 31 December 2024).

2. Activity 2.5.1: Reviewing status and gaps of international reporting obligations with focus on thematic SEIS implementation

Since the initial ambition of a full review of the status of international environmental reporting obligations of EaP countries proved too broad to receive substantial operational feedback from partner countries for all relevant international reporting obligations, it was decided to focus the review on specific areas relevant for SEIS implementation.

An initial overall mapping of reporting obligations and gaps particular for UNECE multilateral environmental agreements was conducted by UNECE together with UBA in September 2023.

The SEIS review request for the “air” theme was issued by the “Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment/Committee on Environmental Policy” Secretariat to UNECE Member States; the process was repeated for “waste and circular economy” in 2024.

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine reported both on the 2023 SEIS Review request on air quality and air emissions [ECE/CEP/AC.10/2024/5](#), and on the 2024 request on Waste and Circular Economy [ECE/CEP/AC.10/2025/5](#)

Dedicated training sessions and support were provided in May 2023 and June 2024, focusing on the SEIS reporting themes “air” (including reporting under the Air Convention) and “waste and circular economy”. UBA experts contributed to both trainings, and the 2024 training on “waste and circular economy” was organised jointly by UNECE and UBA and hosted by UNIDO in Vienna.

2.1. Conclusions

During implementation of the EU4EnvWD programme, the regular meetings of the pan-European UNECE network of the Working Group of Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA) and the Joint Task Force of Environmental Statistics and Indicators (JTFESI) continued to be an essential forum for stabilising the continuous operational co-operation between EU and the regularly participating EaP countries, and for supporting their approximation towards EU developments. The recent proposal to upgrade the JTFESI to a “Working Group” also documents the appreciation of this important function.

While the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) has become less thematised in EU countries, its establishment in the pan-European area (as decided by the 7th Environment for European Conference in Astana in 2011) and its principles for environmental information management still provide relevant guidance at pan-European level.

All five partner countries have been introduced by the project team during back-to-back country workshops after National Policy Dialogues (October 2023 in Yerevan and January 2024 in Tbilisi) and within a study visit to Vienna in December 2023 (for Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia) to the “country space” preparation process for the European State of the Environment report 2025, in which EaP countries were not yet included.

The intended operational work with EaP countries on developing “country spaces” for the European State of the Environment SOER2025 report was hampered by the absence of active co-operation readiness from EEA side. Draft texts and data for environmental transition indicators could be produced for Ukraine, partially for other countries. This initiative will be followed up in EU4GRE programme after the publication of SOER2025.

Through installing the updated Raven software (see Output 2.3), the technical readiness of Georgia for near-to-real-time air quality data transmission from automated monitoring stations to EEA could be re-established in autumn 2024, with updates of the GE monitoring station information in the European airbase. Georgia and Armenia followed at expert level the 2024 update of the Air Quality index by EEA.

The successfully implemented Corine Landcover pilot extensions (full coverage of Moldova, partially of Georgia and Armenia and of the Carpathian region of Ukraine, see Output 2.2) were presented at the regional conference (21 – 22 May 2024 in Tbilisi) and finalised in July 2024. They are published at the [website of the EEA](#), nationally at the [Ecoportal of Armenia](#) and at the [National Spatial Data Infrastructure](#) of Moldova. Efforts for promoting extension of Copernicus High-Resolution Layers (HRLs) with an operational focus on HRVPP (High Resolution Vegetation Phenology and Productivity) and related communication with responsible European institutions (DG NEAR, DG DEFIS and EEA) were not yet successful – to be followed up in EU4GRE, for Ukraine also on the basis of its inclusion into the EU Space Programme Copernicus from 2025 https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-and-ukraine-sign-agreement-ukraines-participation-components-eu-space-programme-2025-04-09_en

For the regular participation of all countries in the UNECE Working Group of Environmental Monitoring and Assessment, the Joint Task Force of Environmental Statistics and Indicators, and the Regional Indicator Trainings, please see the UNECE Report on Output 2.5.

3.1. Conclusions

While the European Environment Agency has not yet followed up on its previous operational co-operation with EaP countries under the ENI SEIS programmes, the EU4EnvWD programme could inform and update Beneficiary EaP countries on relevant developments in State-of-the-Environment Reporting (especially the SOER2025 country spaces) and prepare their future involvement on air, water and waste data. Corine landcover pilots could be extended in view of a future participation of EaP countries (for EU accession candidate Ukraine as of begin 2025) in the Copernicus programme.

The ongoing initiative of DG Environment to promote the participation of EU Accession Candidates Moldova and Ukraine as co-operating countries in the work of EEA/Eionet will be operationally supported from 2025 by the EU4GRE programme.

4. Activity 2.5.3: Support SDG monitoring in the EaP countries

In 2015 the Member States of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and a set of **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and targets. Member States also agreed specific indicators to track their progress towards the 17 SDGs.

4.1. SDG 6.3.2 Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality

The goal of SDG 6 is to ensure access to safe water and sanitation. The achievement of this goal is monitored by indicators, among others the Indicator **6.3.2** “Proportion of bodies of water with **good ambient water quality**”. This indicator illustrates in a simple form the **progress in the protection of water resources** as regards water quality.

The global data collection for Indicator 6.3.2 started in 2017 and takes place every three years. The second reporting cycle was in 2020 und the third one in 2023. UNEP, the custodian agency of this indicator, sends all SDG information to the UN Statistical Division on an annual basis although the SDG 6.3.2 indicator works in a three-year reporting cycle. In those years that new data are not available, the most recent data are resent.

The EU4Environment Water and Data Programme supported the SDG monitoring and reporting in the EaP countries.

4.1.1. Activities and Results

In 2023, the national focal points in the countries were assessed in consultation with UNEP. The information about SDG focal points already available with UNEP was confirmed for Georgia. There are new responsibilities in Armenia and Azerbaijan. No information was provided for Moldova and Ukraine (see Table 2.5.3-1).

Table 2.5.3-1: SDG. 6.3.2 National Focal Points as per December 2024

	Name	Job Title	Organisation	Focal Point Status	Remark
AM	Ms Liana Vardumyan	Head of Surface Water Quality Monitoring and Service Head of the Water Laboratory of Central Laboratory at Hydromet	Hydrometeorology and Monitoring Center, Ministry of Environment	Primary	nominated in 2024
AM	Ms Rana Allahverdiyeva	Chief engineer of the Caspian Complex Ecological Monitoring Service	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources	Primary	named as responsible in 2023
GE	Ms Elina Bakradze	Deputy Head of the Environmental Pollution Monitoring Department	National Environmental Agency (NEA)	Primary	confirmed in 2023
GE	Ms Nana Kitiashvili	Senior Specialist of Disaster Processes and Engineering-Geology Group	National Environmental Agency (NEA)	Supporting	confirmed in 2023
GE	Irakli Jeiranashvili	Head of International and Public Relations Division	National Environmental Agency (NEA)	Put in CC	confirmed in 2023

	Name	Job Title	Organisation	Focal Point Status	Remark
MD	Ms Aurelia Spataru	Deputy Director General	National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, N/A	UNEP Info as of July 2023; no confirmation or update received	
MD	Ms Lilia Racu	Head	National Bureau of Statistics, Dissemination and Communication Division	UNEP Info as of July 2023; no confirmation or update received	
UA	Ms Iryna Rudenko	Head of the Public Health Division of the Policy Implementation Department	Ministry of Health of Ukraine	UNEP Info as of July 2023; no confirmation or update received	
UA	Ms Maryna Bogachuk	Chief	State Statistics Service of Ukraine, Division for Information Support to SDG monitoring	UNEP Info as of July 2023; no confirmation or update received	
UA	Ms Olha Karmazina	Deputy Director	State Statistics Service of Ukraine, Department for Social Statistics	UNEP Info as of July 2023; no confirmation or update received	

The SDG 6.3.2 indicator was briefly presented in two workshops as a side event to the National Policy Dialogue in Armenia in October 2023 and in Georgia in January 2024, focusing on the SOER2025 country spaces (see Annex 2.5.2-1 and 2.5.2-2). The Georgian and Armenian experts were interested to get support to better understand the indicator and to prepare and report the data.

All published data are visible at: <https://sdg632hub.org/#/results>

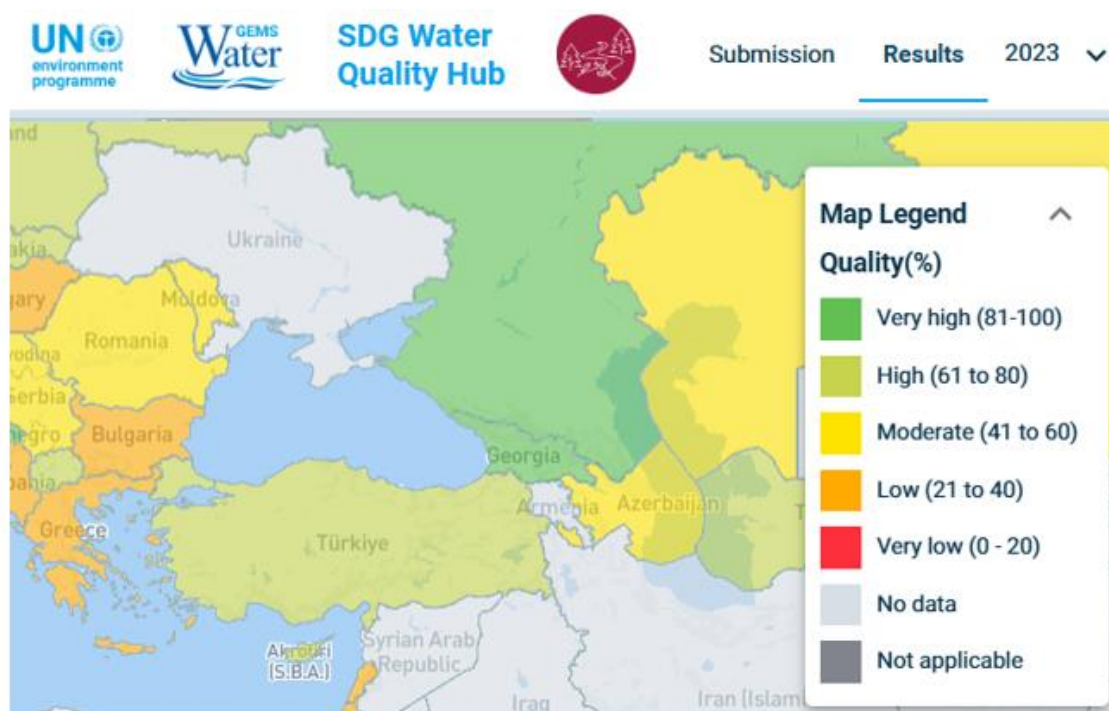


Figure 2.5.3-1: SDG Water Quality Hub (<https://sdg632hub.org/#/results>) showing results from the 2017, 2020 and 2023 reporting. AM: no approved data so far, submission in progress; AZ: first report in 2023 for surface water (rivers and lakes); MD: first reporting in 2023 for groundwater and surface water (rivers and lakes); GE: first reporting in 2020 for groundwater, no report in 2023; UA: no approved data so far, submission in progress.

Georgia already reported groundwater data in 2020 but did not report in 2023. An online workshop for Georgian experts was organised by the programme in April 2024 together with UNEP (see Annex 2.5.3-1, workshop report). This workshop established the contact between the Georgian experts and the UNEP responsible expert for this indicator. UNEP offered any needed support in data preparation and reporting. Unfortunately, the workload of the GE colleagues has not yet allowed them to update the groundwater data reported in 2020 and to report new surface water data.

Armenia has not yet reported any data for the SDG 6.3.2 indicator. They had also asked for support, and an online workshop similar to the one for Georgia was held for Armenia in October 2024 (see Annex 2.5.3-2, workshop report). The Armenian experts started collecting and preparing the data and got support by UNEP. As of January 2025, there were still issues to solve and no Armenian data have yet been published.

Moldova and **Azerbaijan** have reported data without the support offered by the programme.

4.1.2. Conclusions

Moldova and Azerbaijan reported data for the SDG 6.3.2 indicator for the first time. It is uncertain if these countries would have reported data without the intervention of the EU4Env Water & Data program. In any case, the program did not provide support in data preparation, but in the case of Azerbaijan the program established the contact with the responsible UNEP experts and they supported AZ in data preparation and reporting. In Georgia and Armenia, awareness of the importance of the indicator was increased and detailed information about the data preparation and the process of reporting was provided. Both countries have expressed their intention to submit the required data in the future. Ukraine's priorities were not SDG 6.3.2 indicator reporting at that time. However, it may be possible to help Ukraine catch up internationally in this area in the coming years.

In general, data quality should be improved in the coming years in all countries, so that data can be reported for groundwater as well as for rivers and lakes.

5. Annexes

Activity 2.5.2: Enhance co-operation of EEA/Eionet and UNECE with EaP countries on environmental monitoring and assessment

2.5.2-1: EU4EnvWD_WORKSHOP-REPORT_SOER2025_AM_Oct23

2.5.2-2: EU4EnvWD_WORKSHOP-REPORT_SOER2025_GE_Jan24

2.5.2-3: Draft SOER 2025 country space for UKRAINE

Activity 2.5.3: Support SDG monitoring in the EaP countries

SDG 6.3.2 Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality

2.5.3-1: EU4EnvWD_WORKSHOP-REPORT_SDG632-GE_Apr24

2.5.3-2: EU4EnvWD_WORKSHOP-REPORT_SDG632-AM_Oct24

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