

LETTER OF INTENT

Reg. EEA # 53002

between

The Ministry of Nature Protection of the Republic of Armenia

and

The National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, on the one part

and

The European Environment Agency, on the other part

Considering that the Ministry of Nature Protection of the Republic of Armenia, as a national executive body, is authorised to develop and implement the policies of the Government of the Republic of Armenia in the field of environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources.

Considering that the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia, as a national body, is authorised to collect, process, summarise and publish statistical environmental data, in cooperation with state and local government agencies as well as international organizations and national statistical services.

Considering that the European Environment Agency is an agency of the European Union governed by Regulation (EC) No 401/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council¹ dedicated to providing objective, reliable and comparable information on the environment, with the aim to ensure that the decision-makers and the general public are kept informed on the state and outlook of the environment in Europe by working in partnership with government departments and agencies, in particular through the European Environment Information and Observation Network (Eionet), international conventions and UN bodies, the scientific community, private sector and civil society.

Recognising the objective of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) to share the benefits of the EU with neighbouring countries, thus strengthening stability, security and well-being, and the European Commission's assistance to the countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy provided by a single instrument – the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI).

Re-confirming the willingness to contribute to the international environmental information domain in accordance with the decision of the European parliament from 11 December 2013 granting Armenia access to the EU's world leading programmes, including environment. The EU and Armenia completed negotiations on an Association Agreement, including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), in July 2013. The negotiations will allow Armenia to drive forward a programme of comprehensive modernisation and reform based upon shared values, political association and economic integration.

¹ OJ L 126 of 21.5.2009, p. 13.



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Recognising that working towards a 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, also fully embedded in UNECE's Environment for Europe process and endorsed as a concept by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Considering the objectives set out in the Declaration on Cooperation on Environment and Climate Change in the Eastern Partnership agreed by the Ministers for Environment of the EU Member States, the Ministers for Environment of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries, the EU Commissioner for Environment, the EU Commissioner for Climate Action and the EU Commissioner for the European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement gathered in Luxembourg on 18th October 2016.

Recognising the ENI SEIS II East project launched in February 2016 for a period of 48 months, as a continuation of the 2010-2015 cooperation under the ENPI-SEIS project involving also the Republic of Armenia, to help protect the environment in the European Eastern Neighbourhood region by improving capacities of relevant national authorities to respond to regional and international commitments related to environmental reporting, and to manage and use environmental information to support a regular process of environmental assessment and evidence-based decision-making.

Mindful of the work of the United Nations, in particular through all its actions contributing to keeping the environment under review, improving public access to information and public participation in environmental matters, thus ensuring transparency, accountability and support to evidence-based decision-making.

Stressing the importance and the implementation of the ENI SEIS II East project at national level through participation and engagement in project activities.

Desirous to further relationships with the neighbouring countries and visibility in the international environmental information domain, and build on the commitments that the Republic of Armenia has already taken, the **Ministry of Nature Protection and the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia hereby agree to work together with the European Environment Agency and associated partners in accordance with the SEIS principles and in the framework of the ENI SEIS II East project.**

The **Ministry of Nature Protection and the National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia commit** to improve the access and availability of environmental data and information, and thereby will:

1. Endorse the implementation of SEIS principles at national level to improve the data exchange and accessibility of environmental information in accordance with the EEA/Eionet data policy and the uptake, as appropriate, of shared EEA/Eionet work practices and tools.
2. Ensure dissemination and access to environmental information, analysis and assessment to the public, through official information platforms (such as <http://www.mnp.am/>, or <http://www.armstat.am/>, regularly maintained and supported by national authorities as a reliable source for access to environmental information.



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3. Strengthen inter-institutional cooperation with other partners at national level by considering the roles of the **Ministry of Nature Protection** and the **National Statistical Service**, in their capacity as host organisations of the appointed National Focal Points for the ENI SEIS II East project, and provide support in designating, establishing and operationalising an inter-sectorial committee (or working group) for coordinating SEIS related activities and the evaluation of environment policy at national level.
4. Ensure strong synergies between the activities and objectives of the ENI SEIS II East project and other relevant projects implemented in the Republic of Armenia, in particular the support provided to the **Ministry of Nature Protection** and the **National Statistical Service** and other beneficiaries through the EU-funded project contributing to the approximation of the EU environmental *acquis*.
5. Undertake practical steps for the exchange of environmental information at national level underpinning the agreed set of environmental indicators, as reviewed through the UNECE Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators (JTFEI), Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA), and as defined in the June 2016 Ministerial Declaration of the 8th UNECE Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference.
6. Undertake practical steps to reinforce the capacity and internal procedures for the establishment of a regular assessment process in the Republic of Armenia to serve and guide national environmental policy, and contribute to future regional, pan-European and global environmental assessments.

The European Environment Agency, in the framework of the current ENI SEIS II East project phase, will:

1. Provide support through technical assistance and capacity building activities covering specific thematic areas and responding to the identified needs, in particular on the application of agreed and international standards for data management and sharing, as well as the production of indicators for assessments to respond to international commitments.
2. Improve cooperation, by organising targeted events and/or invite national representatives to gain experience and best practices from the Eionet experts community, the understanding of its data reporting mechanisms and tools, and the work undertaken at European level to assess the state and outlook of the environment.
3. Create dialogue and synergies with other relevant EU projects and international initiatives.
4. Train national authorities on Eionet working practices, as applied in the Eionet countries, including production and use of environmental indicators and policy evaluation.
5. Provide the necessary financial resources under the current ENI SEIS II project to allow the execution of the agreed project activities in the Republic of Armenia, as approved by the project governance structure and in balance vis-à-vis the regional priorities.



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6. Ensure visibility of the cooperation through the project website and other relevant media maintained by the EEA, as appropriate, and through regular dialogue with Eionet National Focal Points and experts to stimulate awareness and involvement in project activities. The involvement of the civil society and other partners will be ensured as defined in the project's Communication and Visibility Plan.

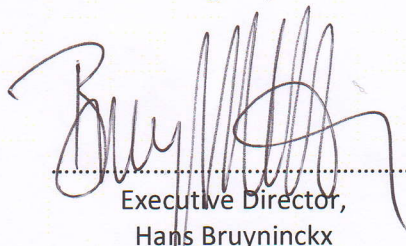
All parties agree to discuss the commitment set periodically and review the continuation of the cooperation on the yearly basis after the signature of the present Letter of Intent by all parties.

For the Ministry of Nature
Protection of the Republic of
Armenia


Minister,
Artsvik Minasyan

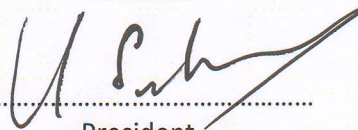
30/08/2017
Date

For the European Environment
Agency


Executive Director,
Hans Bruyninckx

13/9/17
Date

For the National Statistical
Service of the Republic of
Armenia


President,
Stepan Mnatsakanyan

30/08/2017
Date



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