

Annex

Terms of reference for the Group of Friends of the Shared Environmental Information System

(as approved by CEP on 25 October 2013)

1. Ministers decided at the Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference (Astana, 21–23 September 2011) to establish a regular process of environmental assessment and to develop a Shared Environment Information System (SEIS) across the region in order to keep the pan-European environment under review. These terms of reference define the modalities of a coordination mechanism, in the form of a Group of Friends of the Shared Environmental Information System (Friends of SEIS).

2. The main purpose of this mechanism is to provide a platform for the exchange of information about ongoing and planned activities relevant to SEIS development, and to build synergies among and join the efforts of the main interested stakeholders.

3. Friends of SEIS will be led by the Chair of the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP). The following bodies and organizations are invited to nominate members to the Group:

- (a) The CEP Bureau;
- (b) The Bureau of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment;
- (c) Governing or subsidiary bodies of relevant United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) multilateral environmental agreements;
- (d) The European Commission;
- (e) The European Environment Agency;
- (f) The United Nations Environment Programme;
- (g) The World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe;
- (h) The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development;
- (i) The Regional Environmental Centres;
- (j) The European ECO Forum.

ECE member States are invited to nominate their members to the Group, based on a balanced geographical representation. All countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia are strongly encouraged to nominate their members to the Group. The CEP Chair may decide to invite representatives of other bodies and organizations, as necessary.

4. Friends of SEIS will meet when necessary (once a year on average). Preferably, the Group’s meetings will be organized back to back to meetings of other bodies (e.g., CEP, the CEP Bureau, the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment). The Group shall keep its meetings to the minimum necessary and shall work as much as possible by electronic means (e.g., e-mail, teleconference).

5. At its first meeting, Friends of SEIS will agree on a plan of their concrete activities. Such a plan shall take into account SEIS-related developments, including, among others, the SEIS-related documents submitted to the nineteenth session of CEP (ECE/CEP/2013/15, ECE/CEP/2013/18, and ECE/CEP/2013/13). Specifically, Friends of SEIS should aim to provide answers to the following two questions to the twentieth session

of CEP in 2014: (a) How to monitor and evaluate progress: what should be the clear targets and performance indicators for the development of SEIS?; (b) How to organise and shape the regular assessment process taking into consideration the benefits of SEIS?

6. Friends of SEIS will be serviced by the ECE secretariat. Conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Geneva will be provided for the meetings of Friends of SEIS. The working language will be English.

7. Donors will be invited to support the work of Friends of SEIS, including the travel of eligible members, as well as, in case of need, the travel of ECE staff to participate in and support the organization of meetings held outside of Geneva.

8. These terms of reference will cover the biennium 2014–2015. CEP may decide to extend them at its session in late 2015.

9. The Friends of SEIS will regularly inform CEP on the implementation of its mandate.
