

Ukraine's Integration into the European Environment Agency: Opportunities for Environmental Policy and EU Accession

Executive Summary

August 2026



Resource and Analysis Center
"SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT"



Information center
"Green Dossier"

Authors

Nataliya Andrusyevych (Resource and Analysis Center «Society and Environment»)
Volodymyr Voloshaniuk (Resource and Analysis Center «Society and Environment»)
Tamara Malkova (Information Centre «Green Dossier»)



This publication was produced within the project “Supporting the activities of the Ukrainian National Platform of the EaP CSF in 2025-2026” implemented by the Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the Resource and Analysis Center “Society and Environment” and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union or the Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 18 June 2026, Ukraine became a partner country of the **European Environment Agency (EEA)** and joined the **European Environment Information and Observation Network (Eionet)**. This provides Ukraine with an opportunity to integrate into the European environmental information system before becoming a member of the European Union, gain access to common methodologies, digital platforms, expert networks, training programmes and technical assistance, and gradually align its national environmental monitoring and reporting systems with the requirements of the EU environmental acquis.

The significance of this development extends far beyond environmental monitoring. For most legal acts under **Chapter 27 – Environment and Climate Change**, legislative approximation alone is not sufficient. Effective implementation requires well-functioning environmental monitoring systems, regular collection of high-quality data, harmonised methodologies, digital infrastructure and extensive reporting obligations. These elements constitute the core mandate of the EEA and Eionet and are simultaneously indispensable prerequisites for the practical implementation of the EU environmental acquis.

Ukraine's cooperation with the EEA has developed over many years through the implementation of the **ENPI-SEIS** and **ENI SEIS II East** projects, the introduction of the principles of the **Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS)**, the participation of Ukrainian experts in thematic Eionet networks, and cooperation within the framework of the **Energy Community**. These initiatives have contributed to the development of environmental monitoring systems, the harmonisation of indicators, improvements in environmental reporting, and have created a strong professional foundation for Ukraine's further integration into the EEA and Eionet.

This cooperation is becoming particularly important at a time when Ukraine is simultaneously conducting negotiations on accession to the European Union, reforming its national environmental monitoring system and implementing post-war recovery. Building a modern environmental information system in line with European standards will enable these processes to be synchronised, avoid duplication of future reforms and ensure that environmental data serve as a sound basis for informed policy and management decisions.

Participation in the EEA and Eionet creates a number of practical opportunities. These include establishing a national Eionet network with clear coordination among public authorities and environmental data providers, modernising the entire environmental data management cycle—from monitoring to reporting through the **Reportnet** platform—using common datasets to fulfil national, European and international reporting obligations, and applying European methodologies, digital services and indicators. Together, these measures will improve the quality of environmental information, strengthen institutional capacity and facilitate the practical implementation of EU environmental legislation.

At the same time, integration is a two-way process. Ukraine can make a valuable contribution to the European environmental knowledge system through its experience in documenting and assessing the environmental impacts of war. Methodologies for environmental damage assessment, digital tools for crisis monitoring, the integration of Earth observation, geospatial technologies and field surveys, as well as practical experience gained in responding to a large-scale environmental crisis, can contribute to further developing the EEA's approaches to emergency response and environmental assessment under crisis conditions.

To ensure effective integration into the EEA and Eionet, this paper proposes a **phased approach**. Priority actions include designating a **National Focal Point (NFP)** and a **National Data Flow Coordinator (NDFC)**, conducting an inventory of environmental information systems and existing datasets, establishing a national network of experts, identifying priority data flows for pilot reporting and gradually expanding Ukraine's participation across the Eionet network.

Ukraine's partner country status within the EEA is not merely a new framework for international cooperation; it is also a practical instrument for preparing the country for EU membership. It provides an opportunity to strengthen environmental governance, modernise environmental monitoring, support the implementation of Chapter 27 and establish a robust evidence base for post-war recovery. At the same time, Ukraine's participation will strengthen the European environmental information system, making it more comprehensive and resilient in addressing current environmental challenges.

Realising these opportunities will require coordinated institutional, organisational and regulatory efforts by Ukraine, supported by a long-term partnership with the European Environment Agency.

1. USE UKRAINE'S EEA PARTNER COUNTRY STATUS AS A TOOL FOR PREPARING FOR EU MEMBERSHIP

1.1. Move from project-based to systemic cooperation with the EEA

Ukraine should use its partner country status as a basis for establishing long-term, structured cooperation with the European Environment Agency. Cooperation should extend beyond individual technical assistance projects and cover all major areas of **Chapter 27 – Environment and Climate Change** where the implementation of the EU environmental acquis depends on effective environmental monitoring, high-quality environmental data and reporting systems.

1.2. Initiate a dedicated EEA support programme for Ukraine

The European Environment Agency, together with the European Commission, should consider establishing a dedicated support programme for Ukraine, modelled on the EEA cooperation programme for the Western Balkans. Such a programme would provide a structured framework for capacity building, institutional development, technical assistance and gradual integration into EEA activities throughout the EU accession process.

1.3. Integrate cooperation with the EEA into the implementation of Chapter 27

Cooperation with the EEA should become an integral component of Ukraine's implementation of **Chapter 27**. When planning the implementation of the environmental acquis, Ukraine should systematically use the Agency's technical expertise, methodologies and analytical tools as part of implementing individual directives and regulations, particularly in the fields of:

- ambient air quality;
- water policy;
- biodiversity;
- environmental noise;
- land resources; and
- circular economy.

1.4. Use cooperation with the EEA to support the EU accession negotiations

Ukraine should fully utilise cooperation with the EEA as an instrument for preparing for EU accession negotiations. This includes supporting the fulfilment of negotiation benchmarks, preparing implementation plans for specific EU directives and regulations, strengthening institutional capacity, and improving the evidence base required throughout the accession process.

2. ENSURE THE GRADUAL DEVELOPMENT OF UKRAINE'S NATIONAL EIONET SYSTEM

Ukraine should adopt a phased approach to participation in Eionet. At the initial stage, the country should avoid attempting to engage simultaneously in all Eionet reporting streams. Instead, participation should gradually expand, beginning with the areas that are most relevant to Ukraine's EU integration priorities and where the necessary institutional capacity already exists.

2.1. Designate a National Focal Point (NFP) and a National Data Flow Coordinator (NDFC)

Ukraine should designate a **National Focal Point (NFP)** and a **National Data Flow Coordinator (NDFC)** to ensure effective participation in the EEA and Eionet. These functions should be assigned to specific institutions or dedicated structural units, with their mandates, responsibilities and coordination mechanisms clearly defined at the national level.

Adequate human, financial and technical resources should be allocated to support these functions. Importantly, the operation of the NFP and NDFC should not depend solely on individual technical assistance projects or a single staff member, but should become an integral part of Ukraine's permanent institutional framework for environmental governance.

2.2. Conduct an inventory of environmental information systems, datasets and institutional capacities

Ukraine should undertake a comprehensive inventory of existing environmental information systems, environmental datasets and institutional capacities. This exercise should identify the public authorities, research institutions, enterprises and other organisations that already collect environmental data potentially relevant to cooperation with the EEA.

For each dataset, the inventory should identify:

- the responsible data owner;
- the legal basis for data collection;
- the frequency of data updates;
- geographical coverage;
- storage format;
- level of accessibility;
- methodology used for data generation; and
- compliance with EEA reporting requirements.

The outcome of this exercise should be a consolidated inventory of national environmental information systems and datasets, together with a clear identification of existing data and capacity gaps.

2.3. Establish a national Eionet network

Ukraine should establish a **national Eionet network** involving representatives of central and regional public authorities, environmental monitoring institutions, research organisations and other bodies responsible for generating or using environmental information.

During the initial stage, Ukrainian experts should participate in a limited number of thematic Eionet groups that are of the highest relevance to Ukraine's priorities. Their involvement should go beyond attendance at meetings and include:

- reviewing technical documents;
- exchanging methodologies and best practices;
- participating in expert consultations;
- contributing to the preparation of technical proposals; and
- disseminating knowledge and experience within Ukrainian institutions.

2.4. Launch pilot reporting through Reportnet

Ukraine should initiate **pilot data reporting through the EEA Reportnet platform**. Priority reporting streams should be selected jointly with the EEA, taking into account Ukraine's national priorities, the maturity of existing environmental monitoring systems and the needs of the EU accession process.

Priority should be given to reporting areas where:

- responsible institutions are already in place;
- environmental data are collected on a regular basis; and
- datasets can be brought into compliance with EEA requirements within a reasonable timeframe.

Once priority reporting streams, responsible institutions and experts have been identified, Ukraine should carry out a pilot reporting cycle using the EEA Reportnet platform. Before the pilot begins, designated staff should obtain access to the platform, complete practical training and agree with the EEA on the applicable technical requirements and reporting timelines.

The pilot reporting exercise should cover the entire reporting workflow, including:

- preparation of datasets by the responsible institution;
- quality assurance and validation;
- national coordination and approval;
- submission through Reportnet;
- automated quality checks; and
- correction of identified errors.

Following completion of the pilot phase, an evaluation should be conducted covering:

- the quality and completeness of submitted data;
- compliance with reporting deadlines;
- technical and institutional challenges encountered;
- training needs; and
- additional resource requirements.

2.5. Ensure the long-term sustainability of the national Eionet system

Ukraine should establish a sustainable institutional framework for the long-term operation of its national Eionet system. This should include common standards governing the quality, documentation, accessibility, protection and confidentiality of environmental data, applied consistently across all responsible institutions.

Adequate human, financial and technical resources should be secured to ensure the effective and sustainable functioning of the national Eionet system over the long term.

The Ukrainian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (UNP) (<http://eap-csf.org.ua/>) is a network of more than 150 non-governmental organizations in Ukraine that advocates Ukrainian interests within the framework of the Eastern Partnership. The platform is part of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF).

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) is a unique multi-layered regional civil society platform aimed at promoting European integration, facilitating reforms and democratic transformations in the six Eastern Partnership countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Serving as the civil society and people-to-people dimension of the Eastern Partnership, the EaP CSF strives to strengthen civil society in the region and boost pluralism in public discourse and policy-making by promoting participatory democracy and fundamental freedoms. The EaP CSF is a non-partisan bona fide non-governmental organisation”.

Contacts

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Ukrainian National Platform

eap-csf.org.ua

unp.eap@gmail.com

www.facebook.com/unp.eap.csf

Resource and Analysis Center “Society and Environment”

www.rac.org.ua

office@rac.org.ua