

London Group on Environmental-Economic Accounting

Terms of Reference

September 2025

Draft for discussion at the 31st London Group meeting

Background

1. The London Group on Environmental-Economic Accounting, formerly London Group on Environmental Accounting, is a city group¹ of the United Nations Statistical Commission, established in 1993 to provide a forum for experts from national statistical institutions, international organizations and researchers to share experiences, discuss conceptual, methodological and practical issues related to environmental economic accounting and advance its development. It gathers experts from statistical offices, environment agencies, and international organizations as well as research institutes, universities, and individual researchers.
2. Since its establishment, the London Group provided a forum for advancing the conceptual and practical development on environmental-economic accounts, discussing best practices, and promoting the adoption of concepts. In 2017 the original mandate and governance structure of the group was updated to reflect the group's role in the 2012 revision process of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting Central Framework (SEEA-CF) and to more clearly define the relationship to United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental-economic Accounting (UNCEEA) and its SEEA technical committees. As the work of the London Group has a close links with the UNCEEA both groups maintain close relations.
3. To encourage the adoption of the SEEA, harmonized concepts and best practices, the London Group promotes the results of its efforts via the SEEA website and through contributing to methodological and operational manuals, among other outputs.
4. *[this para will be rewritten pending the discussion with the LG in sept. and the decision of the UNSC in 2026]* In 2025 the London Group agreed to change its name from the "London Group on Environmental Accounting" to the "London Group on Environmental-Economic Accounting" and to update its terms of reference to better reflect its scope of work. The updated name and terms of reference will be submitted to the UNSC for approval in 2026

Objectives of the London Group

5. The London Group brings experts together to:
 - a. Discuss and advance conceptual, methodological and technical developments in environmental-economic accounting,
 - b. Identify emerging issues related to the SEEA and advance environmental-economic accounting in the long term,
 - c. Provide a forum for collaboration, sharing of national and international expertise, and support the promotion, implementation and use of SEEA; and

¹ <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/citygroup/index.htm>

- d. Contribute to the work programme of the UNCEEA and conduct research in close cooperation with the related technical committees (SEEA TCs).

Multiyear Work Programme

6. The concrete work objectives are formulated in the group's multiyear work programme, typically set for a period of three to four years. The multiyear work programme is developed by the London Group, with the guidance of the Chair and the Bureau, considering priorities identified at the London Group meetings and the priorities of the UNCEEA and its technical committees.

Members

7. The London Group is open for participation of experts from statistical offices, environment agencies, international organizations, research institutes, universities and individual researchers and experts, who share an interest in advancing conceptual and methodological developments as well as the implementation of SEEA.
8. Participation in the London Group is initiated by answering the call to participate and contribute to the annual meeting. Members are expected to actively contribute to the work of the group.

Meetings

9. The London Group meetings usually take place once a year. The meetings are in-person gatherings, but for specific cases virtual participation can be granted. Additional meetings (either in person or virtual) may be organized as needed upon recommendation of the Bureau.
10. Participation in the meetings of the London Group is on a voluntary basis. Experts can express interest in participating in the London Group meetings and are expected to actively contribute to the meetings. Experts participate in the meetings in their individual expert capacity and do not necessarily represent the official position of their respective countries or organizations.
11. Observers interesting and gaining knowledge in the field of environmental-economic accounting are welcome to participate at the annual meeting within the capacity limits.
12. Based on the received expressions of interest for papers and presentations for the annual meeting, the London Group Chair and Bureau develops the detailed agenda of the annual meeting.
13. The meetings of the London Group are led by the London Group Chair.
14. The Chair will prepare minutes of the meeting in consultation with the Secretariat, the session chairs and the speakers and will circulate them to the meeting participants.
15. The meeting hosts and locations are selected by the Chair, who seeks to ensure geographical variation in the meeting location in order to facilitate participation from a diverse set of experts. Organizations hosting a meeting of the London Group are expected to provide a venue for the meeting.

Governance of the London Group

Chair

16. The tasks of the Chair include the following:
 - a. facilitating the discussion during and in-between meetings, and ensuring that the programme of work is implemented according to schedule;
 - b. curating an up-to-date mailing list of members to circulate relevant information;
 - c. Evaluating, in consultation with the Bureau and the London Group, requests from the UNCEEA with regards to the participation of the London Group in working on the UNCEEA work programme and research issues.

17. The Chair, in working out the programme of work of the London Group and setting priorities for the Group, should strike a balance between the short-term research agenda and requests from UNCEEA and the long-term perspective and independent research interests of the Group, and seek to ensure a balanced geographical representation of experts in the Group.

Selection of the Chair

18. The position of Chair has a tenure of 3 years. Re-election is possible.
19. Candidates are expected to have recognized overarching high-level expertise in the field of environmental economic accounting. In addition, they should currently be working primarily in the field of environmental-economic accounting, preferably in a position at a statistical institution or department that provides them with the necessary methodological competencies and resources to perform the duties of a London Group chair. Having played an active role in recent meetings of the London Group is a strong advantage.
20. A call for the expressions of interest will be circulated at least two months prior to the anticipated change in leadership. The Bureau will review the submissions with a view to ensuring appropriate rotation and representation in the position. Should a clear candidate emerge from this process, the candidate will be informed and the decision will be communicated to the London Group in writing and at the following annual meeting. In the event that multiple expressions of interest are received and no consensus is reached, an online vote will be conducted. Each country and organisation that attended one of the two most recent London Group meetings will be entitled to vote. The incoming Chair will assume the role in conjunction with the upcoming meeting.

Bureau

21. The Bureau of the London Group is a decision-making body with the tasks of: (a) coordinating the activities in-between annual meetings, (b) assisting in developing the agenda for the annual meetings, (c) providing advice on the development of a multiyear programme of work; (d) arranging the handover of Chair responsibilities and addressing other administrative matters related to the management of the Group; (e) providing guidance on the coordination with the UNCEEA and other relevant groups, and (f) supporting the Chair in the discharge of his or her responsibilities.
22. Representation in the Bureau will include both members of national and international organisations. New members of the Bureau are selected by the London Group at the annual meeting. The current membership is posted to the London Group website.
23. Membership in the Bureau is not closed. Consideration should be given to rotating its membership, taking into account expressions of interest and ensuring balanced regional representation. The Bureau should be maintained at approximately 9 members to facilitate effective communication and decision-making.
24. The Chairs of the SEEA Technical Committees are offered membership in the London Group Bureau to ensure close coordination of the activities. The institution hosting a physical meeting is offered membership in the London Group Bureau for the period from the previous meeting until the meeting hosted.

Secretariat

25. UNSD is providing the Secretariat function for the London Group. The Secretariat will technically assist the Chair and the Bureau in their tasks, including input on developing the agenda and organizing London Group meetings; maintaining a website for the London Group; and maintaining internal and external communication on behalf of the Group (e.g. posting meeting materials and organising official correspondence).

Reporting structure and relationship with the UNCEEA and the Technical Committees

26. The London Group works in close collaboration and coordination with the UNCEEA and may seek for guidance of the UNCEEA with regard to the London Group's multiyear work programme and the agenda for its annual meetings. The London Group will identify its own avenues of research in addition to the work suggested by the UNCEEA.
27. The London Group reports its work progress and meeting outcomes jointly with the UNCEEA for submission to the UNSC. This is done in close cooperation with the two SEEA Technical Groups to ensure clear communication.
28. The Chair of the London Group is a permanent member of the UNCEEA and the UNCEEA Bureau to facilitate the coordination of the work of the London Group and UNCEEA.