

The SEEA indicator initiatives

A preliminary note

United Nations Statistics Division

6th Meeting of the UNCEEA (New York, 15-17 June 2011)

Outline

- Overview of indicator initiatives
- SEEA and indicator initiatives
- Is the integration of these initiatives and the SEEA accounting framework feasible and valuable?
- Challenges
- Way forward

Indicator initiatives

- OECD Green growth
- UNEP Green economy
- Measuring sustainable development
- EU initiatives in the context of Beyond GDP and Europe 2020
 - Task Force 2 on Measuring Environmental Sustainability
- Sustainable Development Indicators (SDI)
- Convention of Biodiversity (CBD) Indicators
 - Target 2 makes explicit reference to the inclusion of biodiversity and ecosystem services into the national accounts.
- Global Bio-energy Partnership (GBEP) - Indicators on bio-fuels
- Revision of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES)

OECD Green Growth

- *“Green growth is about fostering economic growth and development while ensuring that the quality and quantity of natural assets can continue to provide the environmental services on which our well-being relies. It is also about fostering investment, competition and innovation which will underpin sustained growth and give rise to new economic opportunities.”*
- Indicators organized according to:
 - socio-economic context
 - environmental and resource productivity
 - natural asset base
 - environmental quality of life
 - economic opportunities and policy responses.

OECD Green Growth

- SEEA explicitly recognized as the underlying measurement framework supporting the analytical framework of indicators
- Most of the indicators can be derived either from the SEEA or are purely SNA based (except from few on the environmental quality of life)
- Differences in terminology and definitions remain
- Indicator refer both to the central framework as well as ecosystem accounts

Report of the UNECE/Eurostat/OECD Task Force on Measuring Sustainable Development

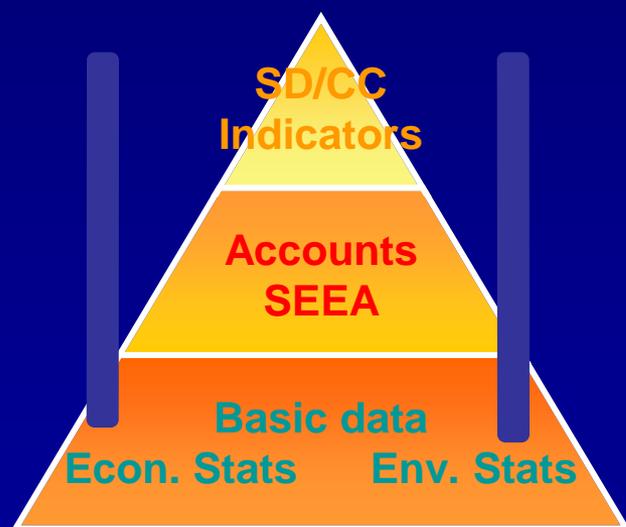
- Report is still preliminary and indicators are not yet well-defined
- SEEA is mentioned in the context of specific indicators and themes
- SEEA framework underpins the majority of indicators

GBEP Indicator initiative on biofuels

- Proposed to the past G8 meeting
- Example of an extension of the SEEA measurement framework to a specific topic
- For several of the indicator an extension (through subsectoring) of the SEEA framework is needed
- Covers indicators both from the central framework and the experimental accounts for ecosystems

Information pyramid

policy
relevance



- Same basic data for accounts and indicators
- Consistent definitions and classifications
- Accounts and indicators mutually reinforcing each other

SEEA and indicators initiatives

- SEEA is a multi-purpose measurement framework
- Indicator initiatives are part of analytical framework

=> Can these initiatives be integrated?

Added value of integration

- Indicators are internally coherent and consistent over time and across countries
- Interpretation of the aggregates and indicators and possible actions
- Quality of the basic data
- Cost effectiveness
- Estimation and now-casting
- More indicators can be derived (e.g. linking the physical data with the monetary data)

Challenges of integration

- Not many countries have Environmental-Economic Accounts implemented
- Not many countries have data broken down by economic activities to easily populate the accounts
- Many countries feel that the SEEA implementation is beyond reach – too complicated

Opportunities

- Indicator initiatives and compilation of SEEA tables are mutually reinforcing statistical exercises
- Alignment of the statistical production process
- Use national accounts structure and data
- Need to align concepts and definition of the indicators with those of the SEEA => the gap is closing
- Bridge information from different sources to the accounts (e.g. energy balances)

Risks

- Data is collected to answer ad-hoc needs for indicators and no time series are developed
- Data is not integrated in the accounting framework
- Data quality is poor
- Scarce resources may be diverted to answer ad-hoc needs

Questions to the UNCEEA

- (a) Does the UNCEEA have a role to play in ensuring that the SEEA framework is acknowledged as the integration framework and that the definitions used for indicators are consistent, to the extent possible, with those in the SEEA?
- (b) Should the UNCEEA ensure that such type of analysis linking the indicators with the SEEA be undertaken in a systematic way as a good practice?
- (c) Should these indicator initiatives be described in SEEA Part III on extensions and applications?
- (d) Should the development of basic environment statistics to populate the core tables of the central framework be closely linked to the development of basic economic statistics in the implementation strategy of the SEEA?
- (e) Should the indicator initiatives be used as a vehicle for the SEEA implementation?