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**Mainstreaming of the SEEA Central Framework in the programme of  
work of international agencies**

Paper prepared by UNSD

*(for discussion)*

## **Mainstreaming of the SEEA Central Framework in the programme of work of international agencies**

### **Introduction**

The UN Statistical Commission adopted the *System of Environmental-Economic Accounting 2012 - Central Framework* (SEEA-Central Framework) as an international statistical standard providing concepts, definitions and technical guidance for compiling integrated statistics on the interactions between the environment and the economy. In 2013, the Statistical Commission endorsed the implementation strategy for the SEEA Central Framework supporting a flexible, modular and phased approach and emphasizing the need for coordination with related international initiatives.

To launch the global implementation of the SEEA and supporting statistics, an international conference was held in New York in June 2013. Participants of the conference from national, international and non-governmental organizations and experts from scientific and academic institutions agreed on a set of recommendations for advancing the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework that became integrated into the medium term work programme of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEE). The conference recommended strong coordination and cooperation of international agencies working on activities and measurement frameworks with focus on policy responses to environmental, development and resource related issues to mainstream the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework in their work programmes and seek alignment and harmonization of activities to facilitate coordination.

The SEEA Central Framework, a multipurpose accounting system, is widely recognized as a useful measurement framework to inform several international policy initiatives providing coherent and comparable statistical aggregates and indicators for evidence-based policy making and for formulating and measuring progress towards sustainable development. Ongoing statistical work related to environmental accounting at international organizations and UN regional commissions, as well as the work programmes and priority areas of the policy-oriented international agencies represent a complexity of activities that need to be coordinated well to advance the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework.

Coordination of the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework must be considered in the context of a large number of related initiatives that are currently underway. One part of those initiatives focus on improving statistical information at the national level and are predominantly statistical programmes and activities aimed at the availability and quality of environmental accounts and supporting statistics. The other part of existing initiatives that are also closely connected to the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework, directly relate to various policy drivers in the environmental-economic space and primarily focus on improving policy responses to environment and development related issues, at the same time engage in incorporating environmental information into policy decision making, develop and maintain substantial measurement and assessment frameworks and, therefore, have the

potential to promote and advance environmental accounting and supporting statistics at the country level.

In order to scale up the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework, it is important to review the practices and activities of international agencies to coordinate efforts to mainstream the SEEA Central Framework in their statistical production. This paper presents information contributed by various agencies, organized around the following issues:

- What are the broad work streams and thematic areas in the programme of the organization most relevant for the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework?
- What are the priority areas and focus of activities?
- Is there environmental assessment undertaken or planned?
- What methodology is used for monitoring? Is there conceptual compliance with SEEA Central Framework?
- Does an indicator set exist or are plans for development?
- Is data collection part of the work programme and what kinds of data are available?
- Are there activities for testing projects in countries?
- In what areas is the organization engaged in capacity building?

The main messages obtained from the responses by 6 organizations are summarized in the next section. Their full responses are included in the Annex, for reference. In the discussion of the issue of harmonization of basic statistics and mainstreaming the SEEA Central Framework, other agencies are encouraged to provide additional information on their practices and experience.

The UNCEEA at its present meeting is requested to assess progress in mainstreaming the SEEA Central Framework in the work programmes of various international and regional organizations. Moreover, the Committee is requested to advise on advancing the process of collaboration in the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework to ensure complementarity of activities and projects implemented at the country level for building capacities in environmental-economic accounting.

### **Main messages**

While the limited information available is not sufficient to provide a comprehensive analysis in this paper, it allows to highlight some of the main messages concerning the mainstreaming the SEEA Central Framework in the work programmes of various international and regional organizations.

#### *Thematic areas and priorities*

A broad range of workstreams and areas of the work programmes of the international and regional agencies are relevant in the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework.

The diverse activities create an opportunity that these can usefully complement each other in the global implementation of the SEEA Central Framework and at the same time indicate

overlapping activities with a need for further strengthening coordination and harmonization of activities.

The SEEA implementation is closely linked to the implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA) in some organizations (UNECE, ECLAC, Eurostat – ESA 2010, the EU version of the 2008 SNA). It is understood that activities on the SNA provide synergies with future work in support of implementing the SEEA Central Framework in countries as good quality national accounts enable linking and analysing environmental data in connection with economic statistics.

Sustainable development measurement frameworks and indicators also have prominent role in the work of several organizations and are relevant for implementation activities of the SEEA Central Framework . Eurostat, UNECE and ECLAC are actively engaged in this area and the OECD Green Growth strategy should also be mentioned in this context.

The valuation of natural assets and natural capital accounting feature prominently in the work programmes of the OECD and the WAVES initiative (World Bank).

Compilation of air emission accounts and indicators is included in the work of Eurostat, OECD, UNECE and FAO.

Agriculture and forestry statistics and accounts are relevant areas of work at FAO and Eurostat. The development of SEEA Agri by FAO is built on the SEEA Central Framework.

As anticipated, the various agencies have different priority areas depending on their mandate and resources. For example:

At FAO, the priority area is the design and testing of the SEEA Agri approach, and linking the SEEA to agricultural statistics used within the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics and to the development of the 2020 Agricultural Census.

ECLAC has been focusing on water accounts and the generation of basic statistics related to environmental protection expenditures to strengthen the ability of countries in the compilation of environmental accounts.

The OECD is developing standard tables in line with the SEEA Central Framework and the Green Growth strategy.

For WAVES the central goal is to institutionalize accounts in the countries.

#### *Data collection, indicator sets and alignment with SEEA*

Several agencies assess data availability and how those respond to policy demand (Eurostat, UNECE, WAVES). Data collection is a major part of their work programme and of the other agencies:

The OECD regularly collects data on environmental protection expenditures, inland waters and material flows. For European countries, this data collection is based on the

OECD/Eurostat questionnaire on the state of the environment and on reporting under the EU regulation on environmental accounting.

ECLAC compiles a set of regional environmental statistics based on data published by regional and international organizations. There is interest to compile more data related to stocks and flows of natural resources but there is little information available.

At FAO the SEEA Agri project is intended, in its current stages, to utilise existing information. However, in the medium to longer term there is the potential to set a structure for data collection in a number of areas.

All agencies place emphasis on ensuring conceptual compliance with the SEEA Central Framework.

In most cases the agencies produce or plan to develop indicator sets some of which are or will be based on environmental accounts.

Eurostat regularly produces several sets of indicators and work is ongoing to increase the number of the indicators that are based directly on accounts.

WAVES uses a comprehensive indicator set and many are related to if countries have applied the SEEA Central Framework.

FAO as part of the SEEA Agri project intends to advance the development of agri-environmental indicators.

The OECD programme of work covers work on indicators to monitor progress towards green growth.

UNECE plans to explore the possibility to start the production of core environmental indicators on a regular basis in the future. Currently the aim is to achieve that countries will regularly provide data on the core indicators on their websites.

#### *Capacity building and work at country level*

Country-level testing of environmental accounting is part of the work programme of Eurostat, ECLAC, FAO and WAVES.

Eurostat has an annual programme of pilot studies where funding is offered to European countries to test and implement environmental accounts.

WAVES is committed to moving beyond theory into practice and countries are now moving into the implementation phase of their work plans.

Testing of the SEEA Agri by FAO will be undertaken in four pilot countries: Australia, Canada, Guatemala and Indonesia.

ECLAC is going to initiate a development account project to promote the adoption of the SEEA 2012 and SNA 2008 in six pilot countries.

All agencies are engaged in capacity building related to SEEA implementation (ongoing: Eurostat, OECD, UNECE, ECLAC, WAVES; planned: FAO).

Eurostat is engaged in capacity building in all areas of statistics for the candidate countries and potential candidates, and in selected areas for several other countries.

The OECD contributes to capacity building through activities of the Task Force on the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework (country members: Australia, Canada, France, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States, institutional members: Eurostat, UNSD and World Bank).

UNECE activities aiming at enhancing the capacity of countries of East Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia to implement international statistical standards include providing methodological guidance, organization of workshops and advisory services supporting the implementation of SEEA Central Framework, at the moment with a special focus on the water and energy accounts.

ECLAC is engaged in capacity building related to national and environmental accounts. In environmental accounts ECLAC has organized in collaboration with UNSD several technical workshops on the SEEA-Water. The new development account will place great emphasis on building capacities in using the SEEA Central Framework in the countries of the region.

WAVES efforts in capacity building are focused to further institutionalize the SEEA Central Framework in the countries. The WAVES program has developed many workshops and courses for partner countries. Many of these efforts are joint ventures with UN agencies, governments, international institutes, nongovernmental organizations, and academics.

FAO is planning in the SEEA Agri framework capacity building in relevant countries to take place across the range of agricultural, forestry, fishing, water and related data domains.

## ANNEX

This annex provides a compilation of the information received from Eurostat, OECD, FAO, the WAVES initiative (World Bank), UNECE and ECLAC.

### **Eurostat**

1. What are the broad work streams and thematic areas in the programme of the organization most relevant for the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework?

Environment statistics, environment accounts implementation of the legal base in the EU covering 6 areas, implementation of the new ESA 2010 (EU version of the SNA 2008) and in particular government accounts and input-output and supply-use tables, energy and transport statistics, business statistics, forestry and agriculture statistics, foreign trades statistics. Also of high relevance are the regular Eurostat publications on indicators for sustainable development and for the Europe 2020 strategy.

2. What are the priority areas and focus of activities?

Environment statistics, environment accounts implementation of the legal base in the EU, government accounts and especially COFOG data, input-output and supply-use tables.

3. Is there regular assessment undertaken or planned of data availability and policy demand and how the data available respond to policy demand?

Yes policy demand and data available are assessed, discussed and monitored regularly in Working Groups and workshops with NSIs in Member States and with main users such as policy Directorates General of the European Commission in hearings and as part of the consultations on the annual and multi-annual work plans.

4. What methodology is used for monitoring? Is there conceptual compliance with SEEA Central Framework?

Basic data are analysed against accounting concepts. Where possible, the source statistics are influenced to make them more aligned with the ESA/SNA/SEEA concepts and definitions.

5. Does an indicator set exist or are plans for development?

Eurostat regularly produces several sets of indicators, including the set related to the Europe 2020 strategy that includes several environment-related indicators, the SDI monitoring and the Resource Efficiency Scoreboard. Some of the indicators are based directly on accounts. Work is ongoing to increase their number.

6. Is data collection part of the work programme and what kinds of data are available?

Eurostat collects the full range of data relevant in this context. Data are transmitted by the EU Member States, EFTA countries, EU candidate countries.

7. Are there activities for testing projects in countries?

There is an annual programme of pilot studies where funding is offered to European countries to test and implement environmental accounts.

8. In what areas is the organization engaged in capacity building?

In all areas of statistics for the candidate countries and potential candidates, and in selected areas for several other countries.

## **OECD**

1. What are the broad work streams and thematic areas in the programme of the organization most relevant for the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework?

A Task Force on the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework was created in September 2013 under the auspices of the OECD Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policy (CSSP) and the Environmental Policy Committee (EPOC). To date, 12 countries (Australia, Canada, France, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States) and 3 institutions (Eurostat, the UNSD and the World Bank) have accepted the invitation to join the Task Force. Its main objectives are the following:

- Develop standard tables for the collection of internationally comparable data on air emissions (volumes) and natural resources (stocks and flows, volumes and monetary units);
- Provide guidelines and practical examples showing how to build air emissions accounts starting from inventories or energy accounts;
- Provide methodological guidelines on the monetary valuation of natural assets;
- Advise on other areas where standard tables could be developed in line with the SEEA and the OECD Green Growth strategy.

2. What are the priority areas and focus of activities?

The agenda of the Task Force on the implementation of the SEEA-CF concerns both methodology and data collection.

The main body of work is conducted by written procedure. A meeting of the Task Force will be organized on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014 at the OECD headquarters in Paris.

3. Is there environmental assessment undertaken or planned?

There are no planned environmental assessment or activities for testing projects related to this Task Force.

6. Is data collection part of the work programme and what kinds of data are available?

The OECD regularly collects data on environmental protection expenditures, inland waters and material flows. For European countries, this data collection is based on the OECD/Eurostat questionnaire on the state of the environment and on reporting under the EU regulation on environmental accounting.

## FAO

1. What are the broad work streams and thematic areas in the programme of the organization most relevant for the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework?

A number of FAO workstreams and areas are relevant in the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework including work on measurement in the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Water, Land, Emissions and Energy areas. The SEEA Central Framework is being used as a tool via the development of SEEA-Agri to encourage improved data quality in underlying statistics, the development of indicators and co-ordination between areas within the FAO.

2. What are the priority areas and focus of activities?

At this stage, the priority area is the design and testing of the SEEA-Agri approach including in selected pilot countries. Related activities include

- i. Linking the SEEA concepts to the frameworks used for agricultural statistics within the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics (Global Strategy)
- ii. Advancing work on land classifications
- iii. Linking SEEA in the development of the 2020 Agricultural Census.

4. What methodology is used for monitoring? Is there conceptual compliance with SEEA Central Framework?

The SEEA Agri will be consistent with the SEEA Central Framework and is best considered an application of SEEA CF concepts to agricultural data and policy issues.

5. Does an indicator set exist or are plans for development?

It is intended that as part of the SEEA Agri project work be completed to advance the development of agri-environmental indicators. Recently FAO published a set of agri-environmental indicators following the indicator set developed by OECD and FAO. The potential to improve this indicator set will be one focus of the SEEA Agri work.

6. Is data collection part of the work programme and what kinds of data are available?

The SEEA Agri project is intended, in its current stages, to utilise existing information. However, in the medium to longer term there is the potential for the SEEA Agri (and hence SEEA Central Framework) to set a structure for data collection in a number of areas.

7. Are there activities for testing projects in countries?

Testing of the SEEA Agri will be undertaken in four pilot countries at this stage, namely: Australia, Canada, Guatemala and Indonesia.

8. In what areas is the organization engaged in capacity building?

Pending the finalisation of the design of SEEA Agri and clarification on the approach to be taken towards its implementation, it is intended that capacity building in relevant countries will take place across the range of agricultural, forestry and fishing and related data domains.

That work will need to take into consideration other SEEA related capacity building work, capacity building initiatives as part of the Global Strategy, and measurement work in specific domains of the FAO such as forestry, fishing and water.

### **WAVES initiative (World Bank)**

1. What are the broad work streams and thematic areas in the programme of the organization most relevant for the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework?

Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services (WAVES) is a global partnership that aims to promote sustainable development by ensuring that natural resources are mainstreamed in development planning and national economic accounts. The four broad objectives are:

- Help countries adopt and implement accounts that are relevant for policies and compile a body of experience.
- Develop approaches to ecosystem accounting methodology.
- Establish a global platform for training and knowledge sharing.
- Build international consensus around natural capital accounting.

WAVES has eight core implementing countries. The countries' work plans include compiling accounts for natural resources like forests, water, and minerals, following the SEEA Central Framework, as well as experimental accounts for ecosystems like watersheds and mangroves. This work is directly related to the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework, and WAVES is committed to ensuring that the framework is used to guide the compilation of accounts.

2. What are the priority areas and focus of activities?

The broad priority areas are listed above. Depending on a country's resources and policy priorities, different accounts will be compiled. Some countries will develop several satellite accounts and others will focus on a couple of priority areas. WAVES is committed to working with central banks and ministries of planning and finance across the world to integrate natural resources into development planning through NCA. The WAVES approach is a long-term project with a central goal of institutionalizing accounts in the countries. The hope is that this will build international consensus around NCA. With the SEEA Central Framework being an international standard, countries will be using internationally-agreed upon methodologies that will ensure consistency across countries. For many countries, ecosystem accounts will provide crucial information for managing their natural resources. WAVES has established an expert committee, the Policy and Technical Experts Committee (PTEC), to help develop methodology on ecosystem accounts, provide quality assurance and contribute to developing the handbook on experimental ecosystem accounting. WAVES aims to cooperate closely with UNSD and other international bodies on this as well as on implementing the Central Framework.

3. Is there environmental assessment undertaken or planned?

All of the core implementing countries develop a scoping study that includes a broad environmental assessment. During this phase, priority natural resources are identified and an assessment of statistical capacity is undertaken. In addition, the study examines the level of interest in the country.

4. What methodology is used for monitoring? Is there conceptual compliance with SEEA Central Framework?

WAVES has developed a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. This has a strong conceptual compliance with the SEEA Central Framework. Many of the Project Development Objectives include establishing accounts that are consistent with the SEEA Central Framework. The Project Development Objectives are as follows:

- To implement natural capital accounting in partner developing and developed countries
- Incorporate natural capital accounting in policy analysis and development planning
- To develop guidelines for implementing ecosystem accounting for global implementation
- To promote the adoption of ecosystem and natural capital accounting beyond the WAVES core implementing countries

All of these objectives, with the exception of the ecosystem accounting, are being evaluated based upon the compilation of the accounts that are consistent with the SEEA Central Framework.

5. Does an indicator set exist or are plans for development?

A comprehensive indicator set exists, and many are related to if countries have applied the SEEA Central Framework.

6. Is data collection part of the work programme and what kinds of data are available?

Data collection is a major part of the program for compiling the accounts. WAVES is a demand-driven program and the core implementing countries collect and compile data from a variety of sources. These data sources include forest inventories, water utility information, mining and extractive industries data, and many others. The compilation of accounts is useful for countries to identify data gaps in the countries as well. This will help to inform countries on what other data need to be collected.

7. Are there activities for testing projects in countries?

Yes, WAVES is committed to moving beyond theory into practice. Countries are now moving into the implementation phase of their work plans.

8. In what areas is the organization engaged in capacity building?

WAVES is committed to capacity building in the countries. The WAVES program has developed many workshops and courses for partner countries. Many of these efforts are joint ventures with UN agencies, governments, international institutes, nongovernmental organizations, and academics. These efforts are meant to further institutionalize the SEEA Central Framework.

## UNECE

### 1. UNECE work areas with particular relevance for SEEA-CF implementation

The objective of the UNECE statistical work is to support countries in improving the quality of official statistics for evidence based economic, social and environmental policy making, and for assessing progress towards international development goals. The work is carried out under the auspices of the Conference of European Statisticians for which UNECE provides secretariat support.

UNECE activities on the **System of National Accounts (SNA)** could provide synergies with future work in support of implementing the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting Central Framework (SEEA-CF) in countries. Good quality national accounts enable linking and analysing environmental data in connection with economic statistics. As part of the regular programme of work, UNECE promotes the 2008 SNA implementation under the guidance of a related steering group and organises biennial meetings of a group of experts. The work is done in close collaboration with UNSD and the Global Implementation Programme for the 2008 SNA.

In June 2013, the Conference of European Statisticians endorsed *the CES Recommendations for Measuring Sustainable Development*<sup>1</sup>, a measurement framework with associated sets of indicators and many links to the SEEA-CF. The framework includes four main types of capital: economic, natural, human and social capital that should be preserved for future generations, and recognises SEEA as the main statistical framework to measure natural capital. The measurement framework has now been taken up by the Friends of the Chair Group on broader measures of progress, established by the UN Statistical Commission to provide statistical advice to the UN Open Working Group for defining the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In April 2014, the plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians endorsed the first ever *Recommendations on Climate Change Related Statistics*<sup>2</sup> that promote the **use of official statistics for climate change analysis**, and enhance the role of official statistics in providing data for greenhouse gas emission inventories. Further work will be undertaken to support the implementation of these Recommendations and explore the use of SEEA-CF in the context of climate change related statistics.

A UNECE Task Force on Environmental Indicators, comprised of statisticians and environmental experts, is striving to **improve the production and quality of environmental statistics** in the region. The work is carried out in close cooperation with the European Environment Agency (EEA), and feeds into the SEEA-CF implementation which depends on good quality statistics on the environment. SEEA-CF is also expected to help to organise and reconcile environmental data using accounting concepts and structures.

In 2014, UNECE will launch new work to support the **implementation of SEEA-CF** in the UNECE region. The work will be carried out in close coordination with UNSD, the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting, other expert groups and partners.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: [www.unece.org/publications/ces\\_sust\\_development.html](http://www.unece.org/publications/ces_sust_development.html)

<sup>2</sup> Version being finalised for publication, available at: <http://www.unece.org/stats/climate.html>

## 2. Priorities for further work at UNECE

It is envisaged that the new work in support of the **SEEA-CF implementation** will first focus on evaluating data availability and the capacity of statistical offices in East Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia and South-East Europe to produce the necessary data for the SEEA modules that have most relevance for the region. In the longer term, the work will focus on preparing national and regional strategies for the gradual implementation of SEEA-CF. The aim will be to identify practical steps for the implementation with countries and facilitate sharing of knowledge and experience among advanced and less advanced statistical systems. In addition to international meetings and regional workshops, some countries could benefit from advisory missions targeted at improving national coordination of work with various agencies engaged in producing environmental statistics.

The current UNECE work on environmental statistics and sustainable development will support successful SEEA-CF implementation through 1) developing basic environmental statistics to respond to national environment policy needs and to the SEEA-CF data requirements, 2) analysing potential uses of the SEEA-CF to derive headline environmental indicators and 3) linking the work to the needs of sustainable development policies, such as the post-2015 development agenda.

Regarding **basic environmental statistics**, the UNECE Task Force on Environmental Indicators aims to improve environmental data collection and reporting in the countries of East Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia and South-East Europe, and to promote comparability of environmental statistics and indicators in UNECE region. The Task Force has assessed the availability of basic environmental statistics and improved the quality of a number of environmental indicators with the countries during the last years. The work of the Task Force on Environmental Indicators is also expected to move its focus towards filling major gaps on production and sharing of environmental statistics to pave the way for the SEEA-CF implementation.

Concerning **the use of SEEA-CF for headline indicators**, the Conference of European Statisticians noted in April 2014 that deriving new indicators should start by examining SEEA-CF, and that countries will need guidance in implementing and using it for climate change related indicators. An important stream of further work will, thus, be to analyse SEEA-CF as a tool to inform climate change policy making with statistical aggregates and indicators that can be derived from the framework.

Considering the **link to sustainable development policies**, the *CES Recommendations for Measuring Sustainable Development* include indicators that can be derived from SEEA-CF. The Recommendations also emphasise the need for further work, e.g. on the measurement of natural capital, biodiversity and ecosystems – methods that are currently being developed in the SEEA volume on ecosystems. They call for future research in three areas: linking ecosystem services to human well-being; valuation on the basis of measurements of degradation; and experimenting with Green National Accounting techniques. First, however, the further work to be carried out by UNECE and its member countries will focus on pilot testing of the CES Recommendations and preparing stock taking reports on the measurement of transboundary impacts of sustainable development, measuring sustainable development at different scales (such as, regional, local, city, company level) and linking subjective and objective indicators.

### 3. Environmental assessments and reviews of capacity to produce environmental data

The Task Force on Environmental Indicators recently carried out **a review of the production and sharing of a set of core environmental indicators**<sup>3</sup> defined in the related UNECE Guidelines. The core indicators are listed in the next section. The review concluded that majority of the countries of East Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia and South-East Europe provide data on all or most of the core indicators, but notable methodological challenges still remain with the quality of some of the indicators and the underpinning data.

UNECE Statistical Division carries out **Global Assessments of national statistical systems**<sup>4</sup>, **including an assessment of the countries' capacity to produce environmental statistics**. The Global Assessments are carried out at the request of the countries of East Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and South-East Europe in collaboration with Eurostat, EFTA and the World Bank. They provide an in-depth analysis and concrete recommendations for improvement of countries' capacity to produce official statistics that comply with international standards and recommendations.

Through its regular work on **Environmental Performance Reviews**<sup>5</sup>, UNECE assesses individual countries' efforts in environmental policy work, and makes recommendations for improvement of environmental performance. This work also helps to strengthen environmental information in the countries of East Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia and South-East Europe. The Environmental Performance Reviews make use of a large amount of environmental information, and thus also provide an indirect assessment of the status of environmental statistics in the country. The reviews are carried out by the UNECE Environment Division. The reviews are currently not supported by established accounts in the countries, but they would benefit from SEEA-CF implementation and the availability of the related data.

### 5. Existing and planned indicator sets

The Task Force on Environmental Indicators has defined **a set of 42 environmental indicators**, for which it has collected data from the countries of East Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia and South-East Europe. This set includes 8 core indicators, in particular: Emission of pollutants into the atmospheric air; Ambient air quality in urban areas; Consumption of ozone-depleting substances; Greenhouse gas emissions; Biochemical oxygen demand and concentration of ammonium in rivers; Nutrients in freshwater; Protected areas; and Waste generation. Data on the indicators and the related datasets have been collected gradually during the years to analyse the data quality, and have not been updated with new figures or revisions. UNECE plans to explore the possibility to start the production of core environmental indicators on a regular basis in the future. Currently the aim is to achieve that countries will regularly provide data on the core indicators on their websites.

The *CES Recommendations for Measuring Sustainable Development* provide **a measurement framework with associated sets of indicators for measuring sustainable development**. These recommendations include “placeholders” for indicators that are not yet

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<sup>3</sup> Analysis on the production and sharing of UNECE core environmental indicators: [www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/ge.33/2014/mtg1/ECE.CEP-CES.GE.1.2014.3\\_E\\_01.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/ge.33/2014/mtg1/ECE.CEP-CES.GE.1.2014.3_E_01.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> The word “global” refers to the in-depth and comprehensive nature of the review carried out at national level. For more information on Global Assessments: [www.unece.org/stats/technicalcooperation/ga.html](http://www.unece.org/stats/technicalcooperation/ga.html)

<sup>5</sup> For more information on Environmental Performance Reviews: [www.unece.org/env/epr/eprdefinition.html](http://www.unece.org/env/epr/eprdefinition.html)

available, including those that are expected to be developed as a result of the SEEA-CF implementation. These indicator sets are also planned to be further aligned with the upcoming SDGs.

The Conference of European Statisticians underlined in April 2014 that a priority for further work **would be to develop a set of internationally comparable key climate change related statistics**. The Conference also supported establishing a forum in the form of an expert meeting that consists of national statistical offices, greenhouse gas inventory compilers and key international organisations active in measuring climate change and related issues. It is likely that the forum will be launched before starting to work on indicators so as to discuss the way forward and base the further work on existing experience and good practice.

#### 8. Areas in which UNECE is engaged in capacity building

Statistical capacity building is an important part of UNECE activities aiming at enhancing the capacity of countries of **East Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia** to implement international statistical standards and guidelines. The activities are carried out in partnership with a number of other international organizations and donors.

UNECE provides methodological guidance, organises workshops and advisory services **to address current challenges in economic, social and environmental statistics and modernising statistical production**. Currently, the priority areas include supporting the 2008 SNA implementation; the development of migration statistics; and the implementation of SEEA-CF, at the moment with a special focus on the water and energy accounts. UNECE also provides **coordination to capacity building activities** through meetings under the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA).

UNECE coordinates the drafting of national implementation plans for the 2008 SNA implementation in the UNECE region in coordination with UNSD and existing working groups. The 2008 SNA implementation plans and the related challenges were last discussed in May 2014. A similar approach could be useful to achieve a coordinated approach to **implementing SEEA-CF**.

In 2012-2014, UNECE carried out a number of workshops under a UN Development Account project on the **measurement of environmental sustainability**, in collaboration with UNSD, EEA and Eurostat. The project aimed to strengthen the capacity of the countries of East Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia to produce basic environmental statistics with a specific focus on agri-environmental, waste and sustainable development statistics.

### **ECLAC**

#### 1. What are the broad work streams and thematic areas in the programme of the organization most relevant for the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework?

ECLAC's Economic and Environmental Statistics unit of the Statistics Division has incorporated the implementation of the SNA 2008 and SEEA 2012 in its workplan. The unit has developed a Strategy for the Implementation of the SEEA Central Framework in Latin America countries. As part of this strategy it is up to the countries through a participatory multi-stakeholder process to identify the most pressing policy questions for which the SCAE can provide useful information for strategic policy analysis.

ECLAC's Sustainable Development Division is also very interested in the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework and its potential to generate policy relevant information. One of the areas of interest is related to environmental protection expenditures.

2. What are the priority areas and focus of activities?

Given limited resources ECLAC has been focusing on water accounts and the generation of basic statistics related to environmental protection expenditures with a view to be able to work with countries in the compilation of environmental activity accounts. There is interest to expand into new areas such as forest and minerals but this largely depends on whether additional resources will be made available.

3. Is there environmental assessment undertaken or planned?

Not applicable for ECLAC

4. What methodology is used for monitoring? Is there conceptual compliance with SEEA Central Framework?

ECLAC works closely with member states in the application of statistical methodologies. Monitoring is carried out remotely through e-mails and phone calls while also technical assistance missions are organized to provide ongoing support and review progress. For all the environmental accounting projects emphasis is placed on ensuring conceptual compliance with the SEEA Central Framework.

5. Does an indicator set exist or are plans for development?

Not applicable

6. Is data collection part of the work programme and what kinds of data are available?

ECLAC compiles a set of regional environmental statistics based on data published by regional and international organizations. There is interest to compile more data related to stocks and flows of natural resources but there is little information available.

7. Are there activities for testing projects in countries?

ECLAC is going to initiate a development account project to promote the adoption of the SNA 2008 and SEEA 2012 in six pilot countries.

8. In what areas is the organization engaged in capacity building?

ECLAC is engaged in capacity building related to national and environmental accounts. In environmental accounts ECLAC has organized in collaboration with UNSD several technical workshops on the SEEA-Water. The new development account will place great emphasis on building capacities in using the SEEA Central Framework.