

Minutes of the 26th Meeting of the London Group on Environmental Accounting

Virtual, 5-8 and 12 October 2020

Papers and presentations can be found here: <https://seea.un.org/events/london-group-environmental-accounting-26th-meeting>.

Day 1: SEEA Central Framework Research Agenda (Moderator: Viveka Palm, Statistics Sweden)

Viveka Palm, interim Chair of the London Group, welcomed participants to the 26th Meeting of the London Group on Environmental Accounting. She announced the new chair of the London Group, Sven Kaumanns of the Federal Statistical Office of Germany, who replaces the previous Chair, Nancy Steinbach of Statistics Sweden. Participants warmly welcomed the new Chair, and Sven Kaumanns thanked the London Group and the London Group Bureau for their support.

Introduction and consolidation, where are we now?

1. Sjoerd Schenau of Statistics Netherlands provided a brief overview of the SEEA Central Framework (SEEA CF) Research Agenda. While some progress has been made over the last year, progress has been slower than usual given the revision of the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting (SEEA EEA). Moving forward, it was emphasized that the different research agendas in the environmental-economic accounting space (e.g. SEEA CF, SEEA EEA, SNA) could be further aligned.

Testing of a method of statistics on fossil fuel transactions from the SEEA

2. Participants discussed a paper by Viveka Palm of Statistics Sweden on a method of recording greenhouse gas (GHG) transfers from SEEA accounts, or basic statistics that feed into SEEA accounts. The paper discussed recording of transfers related to fossil fuels and the rules governing tax abatements and rates on fossil fuels in order to calculate GHG transfers.
3. During the discussion, it was clarified that the paper focused on GHG transfers instead of fossil fuel subsidies because examining GHG transfers would provide a more comprehensive picture, as not all GHG are coming from fossil fuels. Participants voiced interest and support for the approach, but also noted that measurement of tax abatement could prove difficult, and that effective carbon rates could be a potential alternative. Other participants also raised the need to have a reference price which could be easier for users, however, since national reference type differs from each other, the need to design a comprehensive method was raised. In addition, it was suggested to explore the link between this area and carbon sequestration services in the SEEA EEA.

Classification of environmental activities

4. Participants discussed on a paper by Monika Wozowczyk of Eurostat on classification of environment activities. The paper reported the progress of work on the classification of environmental activities in EU countries. The paper also touched on relevant policy and statistical development in this regard.
5. During the discussion, it was highlighted that the classification of environmental activities is an important task as it links to several modules. Participants welcomed the inputs into a revised classification, but noted that in order to have a classification that is relevant at a global level, the revision needs to incorporate inputs of other countries with different situation than EU countries. Aquatic resources, informal activities and resource management were suggested to be looked at further in the future.

SNA/SEEA issues

6. Participants discussed a paper which presented the work of the Task Team on Wellbeing and Sustainability of the Inter-secretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA). The paper explored research issues on environment-related topics in the System of National Accounts (SNA), with a view towards the revision of the 2008 SNA. The Task Team recently compiled a set of proposed guidance in areas such as natural resource depletion, net vs gross measures, ownership of natural resources, among others.
7. During the discussion, participants agreed that some of these issues (but perhaps not all) would affect the SEEA, and that the London Group could contribute to these areas of research. It was stressed that the SEEA community should stay up to date and involved in the revision to ensure that the impacts of any potential changes made during the SNA revision are considered by the SEEA community. Topics of potential consideration and crossover were flagged, including cultivated and non-cultivated resources, ownership of natural resources, green finance, valuation, and the consideration of the atmosphere as an asset. The London Group was asked to submit any written comments on the research topics of the Task Team, including suggestions for new research topics.

Day 2: SEEA Implementation and Applications (Moderator: Gerhard Bouwer, Statistics South Africa)

Treatment of imports and exports in the SEEA CF

8. Participants discussed a paper by Ole Gravgård from Statistics Denmark which presented two options for treating imports and exports in the SEEA CF. Option one follows an approach using the territory principle for recording all processing flows, and option two follows an approach using the residence principle for recording all processing flows.

9. The London Group agreed that the treatment of imports and exports in the SEEA Central Framework should be clarified with the next revision. During the discussion, many participants voiced support for option 1, particularly if compiling from a material flow perspective, as it would make compilation easier. At the same time, participants recognized the merits of the second option, particularly as it follows the principle used by the SNA. Furthermore, the application of both options depends on the availability of statistics.

The OECD on CO₂ emissions from air transport

10. Participants discussed a paper by OECD on CO₂ emissions from aviation industry. The paper describes methods for calculating emissions from aviation using International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) data in order to populate the accounts. The ICAO data include information from all flights except some private and special government flights. The paper details the bridging items and statistics according to both residence and territory principles.
11. During the discussion, participants stressed the importance of applying such analysis on their respective regions. Oftentimes air emission accounts do not fully consider the residence principle, and participants agreed that these estimates could help improve the quality of air emission accounts by adjusting the data to the residence principle. Participants also agreed that this information could be used for energy accounts. It was suggested to explore having comparable big data on maritime data to measure marine emissions. The full report will be available soon, which will also include the impact of COVID-19 on the methodology.

Moving forward with environmentally extended input-output analysis

12. Participants discussed a paper that analyzes the input output analysis from environmental activity perspective which was prepared by Statistics Sweden. The paper analyzed two methods; a “single region input output model” based on domestic technology assumption implemented by New Zealand and EU and a “simplified single country national account compatible” (SNAC) implemented by Statistics Sweden. The paper focuses on the application of EEIO for the estimation of production of GHG emissions.
13. During the discussion, participants discussed the possibility to produce a set of multipliers that will enable countries to estimate emissions abroad. Participants also agreed to share such experiences to learn from each other. The issue of presenting data from such analysis that is based on models was also raised and it was suggested that countries take on the role of data stewards and decide on whether the data can be considered official or not. The level of technology is also diverse and not precise on terms such as footprint and final consumption. In connection to this, the participants agreed that any streamlining of terminology should be done in collaboration with the input-output community. Current lack of international guidelines was raised, and

issues such as who will be responsible to prepare and maintain such guidelines was discussed. Establishing a global platform of data center in different area of activities was suggested to provide a broader analysis on the available data and models.

Drivers of Australia's Pollutant Emissions 1999 to 2019

14. Participants discussed a paper written by Koenraad Van Landeghem of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (Australia) and Peter Meadows of the Australian Bureau of Statistics which described using the Australian national pollutant inventory and the SNA to quantify the relationship between pollutant emissions and economic activity, explain changes to emissions profiles and understand the risk to human health from changes in emissions. The authors explained that this paper shows how different datasets can be linked in order to provide policy-relevant data for users. More broadly, practitioners of environmental economic accounts underutilize data and analytical techniques, which affects uptake of the accounts by policymakers.
15. The London Group welcomed this approach and analysis. During the discussion, the authors clarified details of the decomposition analysis used to quantify the relationship between pollutant emissions and economic activities. An addition factor, namely changes in fuel, was suggested as a possible addition. Changes in fuel could be included through an additional climate change factor in the decomposition analysis, which would capture changes that are heavily dependent on fuel usage. An additional point which emerged during the discussion was the significance of the number of industries for decomposition analysis. Participants noted that decomposition analysis could be sensitive to the number (or disaggregation) of industries included.

Environmental Activity Accounts: Implementation Challenges for Classifying and Measuring Environmental Activity in the U.S. Economy

16. The paper submitted by Julie Haas, Dennis Fixler and Scott Wentland explored the U.S. classifications used for government expenditures and related statistics and their usefulness in constructing accounts related to environmental protection and resource management activities. The authors found that COFOG was too broad to supply all of the information needed and that while local governments had more disaggregated data, this data was more difficult to obtain.
17. Participants discussed the usefulness and utility of COFOG and the experience of different countries in using COFOG for the environmental activity accounts. There has been some work done in Europe which could inform the work being done in the U.S. The discussion surrounding this paper also emphasized the importance of global input into the eventual revision of the classification for economic activities at the international level. During the discussion, it was also noted that the revision of the SNA will cover the revision of many classifications, including those with potential impact on the SEEA.

Recycling Data for Indicators to Measure Circular Economy

18. This session focused on a set of preliminary indicators on circular economy business in Finland, of which some had a SEEA relation. Statistics Finland is looking to develop a set of indicators to be produced on a regular basis and the preliminary set includes indicators on design (patents), material extraction, production, logistics, trade and services, consumption, waste and reuse and recycling.
19. Participants discussed the importance of this work and the usefulness of the SEEA in deriving circular economy indicators, particularly on reused and recycled goods and services. Participants made different suggestions, i.e. to expand the “design” indicators to include aspects of the sharing economy. Other suggestions included to broaden indicators based on production to include company performance or financial sustainability. It was also suggested to link circular economy indicators to other information on emissions, to show the need for a greater circular economy. Finally, it was noted that the time horizon of the indicators should be kept in mind – while certain materials can be circular in the short run, others (such as those embedded in machines and durable goods) can be made circular only in the longer run.

Day 3: SEEA Implementation and Applications, continued (Moderator: Michael Vardon, Australian National University)

The differences between land cover and ecosystem extent and condition accounts

20. Participants discussed the paper prepared by Michael Vardon and others of the Australian National University along with Heather Keith of Griffith University, which outline the differences between the land cover and ecosystem extent concepts. The main conclusions of the paper are that: land cover and ecosystem extent are not the same; that both physical characteristics and production of ecosystem services need to be assessed for measuring condition; and that ecosystem condition and ecosystem conversion need to be assessed against the purpose for which the area is used for.
21. The London Group welcomed the approach taken by the paper and agreed with its main premises. They especially stressed that great care needs to be taken to distinguish between land cover and ecosystem extent. Participants further stressed that land use and ownership are complementary aspects and that they have their place in the accounting framework and help to make the ecosystem accounts more purposeful.

Building the SEEA puzzle in Europe-accounting for 10 flows supplied by nature to the economy and society

22. Participants discussed the paper prepared by Alessandra La Notte of the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, which outlined the example of 10 ecosystem services flows and their integration with the SEEA Central Framework and SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting. The paper is based on the INCA project that provided the Supply and Use tables (SUT) for: crop provision, animal husbandry,

timber provision, crop pollination, regulation of GHG, flood control, soil retention, water purification and nature-based recreation.

23. The INCA results provide a critical mass to start testing the integration of the SEEA EEA with the SEEA CF and check for consistency in order to: avoid double counting between EEA and CF; build the supply chain between ecosystem services and their users through SNA benefits; and harmonize the ecological information with (and within) the accounting format. The London Group welcomed the experience and the proposals put forward by the paper. The discussion was centered around the disentangling approach of the ecosystem contribution from the flows that are already accounted for in the SNA.

Natural capital accounting activities in Eastern Afghanistan- a FAO-GEF pilot assessment for Khost, Laghman, Nuristan provinces

24. Participants discussed the paper prepared by Silvia Cerilli of the FAO, which showcased the example of a Global Environment Facility (GEF) project aiming at understanding land degradation and biodiversity loss by promoting sustainable management and biodiversity conservation in three provinces in Afghanistan. The paper presents results of the ecosystem extent account and ecosystem condition compilation, as well as the main findings related to SDG indicator 15.3.1. on land degradation and on biodiversity metrics. The analysis described in the paper shows linkages and synergies between national and international objectives (the SDGs and the Convention on Biological Diversity) and environmental projects, such as those by the GEF. As well as this it also shows that natural capital accounting may provide accurate, robust, holistic information on environment, biodiversity, land use change for sustainable natural resource planning and management.
25. Participants welcomed the progress made in Afghanistan and noted that the project demonstrated the feasibility of implementing the SEEA EEA. They also noted that tools such as ARIES for ecosystem accounting helped lower the entry barrier for account production, making them more accessible for countries.

A proposal for going beyond valuation in sight of the UNSC discussion on the SEEA E(?)EA

26. The participants discussed the presentation prepared by Aldo Femia of Istat, which outlines an alternative proposal to valuation for the revised SEEA EEA. The presentation reviews the valuation techniques proposed in the draft Chapters 8-11 and argues that the valuation as proposed has a logical flaw. The presentation proposes to drop the imputation, renounce valuation, and to refer to monetary aggregates connected to ES.
27. During the discussion, many agreed that the valuation chapters needed further refinement. At the same time, some members strongly disagreed with the presentation, and stressed the importance of valuation and the value these chapters bring to the

revised SEEA EEA and the power they may bring to the NSOs to value ecosystem services. The participants suggested that it would be useful for Aldo Femia to turn the presentation into a paper highlighting the issues and identify possible ways to minimize disagreements.

Integrating Accounting for Biodiversity and Key Economic Sectors in Uganda

28. Participants discussed the paper prepared by Steven King of UNEP-WCMC, Mark Eigenraam and Carl Obst of IDEEA, which presented an integrated set of biodiversity-related accounts in Uganda. The Uganda Green Growth Development Strategy acknowledges that declines in biodiversity-related natural capital pose risks to the wildlife watching tourism and fisheries sector, which contribute to 7.3% to Uganda GDP and support the livelihoods of 1 to 1.5 million people in Uganda. The paper presents ecosystem extent accounts and species accounts, as well as monetary supply and use accounts for a set of ecosystem services and SNA supply and use tables for the industries associated with wildlife tourism and recreation. These results provide a clear articulation of the risks to a broad range of economic and livelihood activities associated with declines in biodiversity-related natural capital in a national accounting context.
29. The discussion centered around several technical issues covering the accounting structure, disaggregation of ecosystem types, the treatment of national parks as an ecosystem asset and the measurement of cultural services. Participants suggested the further use of disaggregated data as well as the inclusion of supplementary information in the analysis, such as expenditures on national parks, employment in protected areas and private tour operators, and the land cover matrix of protected areas to enrich the usefulness of result in information policy.

Implementation of the SEEA- helping NSOs break through data silos

30. Participants discussed the paper prepared by the National Statistical Office (NSO) of India, which shared its experience on how they have made the journey from having seemingly incomparable datasets the compilation of accounts using the SEEA framework to enable evidence-based decision making. In this the NSO of India brought together various datasets and used big data to monitor the management and conservation of water resources. The integration of various water datasets using the SEEA as the underlying framework helps bring coherence across datasets and enhances analytical capability by linking multiple parameters, which in turn provide actionable insights enabling efficient policymaking.
31. Participants welcomed the integrated perspective taken by the paper through the incorporation of the positive and negative impacts of water use, as well as the competing demand for water use which allows trade-off analysis for policy making. Participants also applauded the institutional arrangement set up by the NSO of India for data collection and quality assessment on water accounts which provides a useful

illustration on the importance of NSOs in coordinating the account compilation and the SDG monitoring process.

Land and terrestrial ecosystem accounts in South Africa- Exploring the ecosystem extent index and ecosystem condition index

32. Participants discussed the paper prepared by *Driver, et. al*, which presented the land and terrestrial ecosystem accounts in South Africa. The presentation highlighted the value of mapping ecosystem types based on their historical extent and the dual perspective taken on intensively modified areas in constructing the accounts. It also presented the derivation of an Ecosystem Extent Index and demonstrated how such index relates to Ecosystem Condition Index with discussion around the challenges in measuring ecosystem condition in the terrestrial realm based on available satellite imagery.
33. Participants welcomed the approach taken in South Africa in disaggregating the natural and semi-natural areas in the land and terrestrial ecosystem accounts and cross-walking the national classification with the IUCN Global Ecosystem Typology. Subsequent discussions centered around several technical issues, covering the approach in the identification of historical extent and natural condition, the determination of reference condition and the robustness of using global dataset in measure national ecosystem conditions. The discussion pointed towards the use of normative approach and expert judgement to determine the reference condition based on national circumstances.

Day 4: SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting Implementation and Applications
(Moderator: Irene Alvarado Quesada, Central Bank of Costa Rica)

Chance for better policy- Grassland ecosystem account provides a missing link between the owners of ecosystems and services provided

34. In her paper for the London Group, Kaia Oras (Statistics Estonia) outlined a proposal for establishing an ownership dimension in ecosystem extent accounts in grasslands in Estonia. The link to ownership within the ecosystem extent accounts provides a direct link to policy, particularly in the case of Estonia, where the goal of the government is to increase grasslands by 2030. More generally, incorporating ownership information into extent accounts creates a link to (monetary) accounts for ecosystem services. The paper also discussed the aggregation of monetary ecosystem service supply tables for analysis on the maintenance and management of ecosystems.
35. Participants applauded the effort made in making the accounts policy relevant and agreed on the importance of incorporating ownership into the accounts. At the same time, it was acknowledged that such an exercise would prove difficult in many countries, owing to data and privacy concerns. Some further topics for exploration were suggested, including looking at disservices, hedonic methods.

Linking ecosystem services and benefits to the economy through bridging- two applications from combined presentations to general equilibrium modelling

36. Participants discussed a paper prepared by Alessandra La Notte (JRC), Silvia Cerilli (FAO) and Alexandra Marques (JRC) which presented two applications—one on a combined presentation of SEEA Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (AFF) and SEEA EEA extent and crop provisioning tables and 2) bridging of ecosystem service accounts to general equilibrium models, in this case to look at the increase of an invasive species on pollination service to pollinator dependent crops and agricultural production and crop prices.
37. The discussion focused mostly on the second application of bridging ecosystem service accounts to general equilibrium models. The accounts showed that the invasive Asian hornet had a significant impact on crop provisioning services and consequently prices. Participants agreed that even though assumptions had to be made for this type of analysis, the approach could be very useful for non-European countries.

State of Play of the SEEA EEA revision

38. The participants discussed the presentation prepared by Anton Steurer of Eurostat, which aimed to summarize the SEEA EEA revision process. The presentation outlined the timeline of the overall process, its governance and coordination, as well as summarized the chapters of the revised SEEA EEA. It concluded with the steps needed to finalize the revision process and outlined the key issues for the adoption of the SEEA EEA. Ecosystem accounting has attracted a lot of attention of policymakers in the recent years and significant resources were dedicated to the revision process so far. As a result, the proposal is to remove the word 'experimental' from the title, include the chapters on valuation and suggest the revised SEEA EEA is adopted as an international standard.
39. Many London Group members agreed that the revised SEEA EEA should be adopted as some sort of statistical standard and that the word 'experimental' could be removed from the title. However, no clear conclusion was reached among members of the London Group on the status of the valuation chapters. This issue will be on the agenda of the next UNCEEA meeting.

Ecosystem accounts in Mexico-NCAVES project

40. The experience of Mexico in the EU-funded Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services (NCAVES) was elaborated in a paper by Raul Figueroa Diaz (INEGI) and Luis Miguel Galindo Paliza (NCAVES consultant). The paper detailed SEEA EEA accounts compiled and the methodological approaches Mexico has taken in assigning monetary values to services such as crop provisioning (unit resource rent), carbon storage and sequestration (separate measurement for each) and pollination (dependency ratio). Participants discussed that the valuation of the contribution of ecosystem services for crop production could be improved by disentangling the

components in the residual value obtained. With respect to pollination services, there was a general agreement that the findings on the effects that pollinators (or the lack thereof) on crops, provide tangible and significant information for policy-makers.

41. The ecosystem integrity index was also discussed in the paper, and participants agreed that the concept/idea was useful for policy and could lend itself to the approach taken in the revised SEEA EEA in terms of the condition accounts. Experts agreed that it will be useful to present the results of the ecosystem integrity index in tables and to link it to the ecosystem services. In terms of the approaches taken for valuation, participants debated the merits of adding values for carbon storage and sequestration as well as the use of resource rent beyond the SNA production boundary.

Testing ecosystem type classifications for SEEA EEA

42. The participants discussed the paper prepared by Patrick Bogaart and Sjoerd Schenau of Statistics Netherlands, which introduces the testing approach to the classifications of spatial units. The testing covered crosswalking 'local' national ecological classifications with the 'global' IUCN-GET Ecosystem Function Groups (EFGs) and assessing coherence between national ecosystem delineations and the USGS-Esri-NC WE map product. The main findings found during the testing were largely encouraging. The paper concluded that the IUCN GET work well for the purposes of ecosystem accounting, however some issues were also identified, such as too little detail on the anthropogenic world and the lack of some ecosystem types.
43. During the discussion, the London Group members pointed out some of the drawbacks already identified by the paper, including that some of the classes of the IUCN GET are too coarse. Further questions on development of additional cartographic material and on how to deal with non-perfect matches between national and IUCN GET classifications were discussed. Lastly, the need for further crosswalks to other classifications was stressed.

Proposal of how to estimate the discount rate for future ecosystem services

44. Participants discussed the paper prepared by Takashi Hayashi of Japan, which aimed to estimate a discount rate of future forest ecosystem assets taking into consideration the ecosystem services provided in the future and to identify what factors affect the discount rate. The paper applies choice experiment (CE) for forest management policy considering timing of which policy effect would appear. The paper concludes that the discount rate for EA should be lower than one applied for consumption (e.g. 1.4% in Stern Review), that the shadow price using higher discount rate may be underestimating the value of natural capital and that the discount rate is related to type or nature of ES, as well as demographic factors (age and gender).

Two languages or two narratives

45. Participants discussed the paper prepared by Kaia Oras of Statistics Estonia, which compares the selected market price and revealed preferences valuation methods to the stated preferences method for valuing grassland ecosystem services. Their starting point on the compilation of the supply and use table of ecosystem services was to use market price or revealed preferences methods, as they are more related to the principles of national accounts. In the end, they propose to complement the market price or revealed preferences methods results with the results obtained using stated preference method and to sum up the service valued. London Group members welcomed the approaches outlined in the paper and recognized the fact that the market price and revealed preference methods tell different stories.

Day 5: Initiatives for implementation at the global level (Moderator, Sven Kaumanns, Federal Statistical Office of Germany)

Implementation experiences in Latin America

46. Participants discussed implementation experiences in Latin America and welcomed the organization of the COMLAC (Comunidad Latinoamericana de Cuentas de Capital Natural/ Latin American community Capital Natural Accounting) which is in its early stages and consists of a network of experts in their individual capacity sharing knowledge and organizing webinars on natural capital accounting. Discussants recommended to keep the community active by organizing frequent meetings where papers and high-profile policy application cases would be discussed. It would also be productive for NSOs in the region to participate and learn from the experiences of the more advanced countries in the region and share their experiences/challenges in the implementation of the accounts. In that sense, it was pointed out that UN ECLAC could support the involvement of the NSOs.
47. As presented during this session, a sample of Latin American countries (Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Peru) share similitudes in the implementation of the accounts with several institutions being involved in their production. One of the most important challenges of the region is that accounts are not produced using a demand-driven approach, thus there are not used to their full potential for policy applications, with the possible exception of Peru.

Implementation experience in Africa

48. The presentation was centered around the creation and organization of the African Community of Practice (CoP) in NCA, which is very well structured and organized in bringing together statistical offices, academia, business, and other institutions in the region. The governance structure supported by focal points nominated by their institution was applauded as well as the dissemination practices. The CoP has a comprehensive website with information on activities, trainings, workshops and a discussion board. It was reported that the CoP has registered 400 individuals from 40 countries. Participants offered advice on how to reach out to francophones and lusophones and suggested to make use of the trainings and presentations in French

prepared by international organizations. It was also suggested to reach out to countries such as Brazil to share their experience in compiling accounts and organizing round-tables and discussions in Portuguese.

Implementation experience in the Asia-Pacific region

49. Participants discussed the comprehensive programme in environmental-economic accounting in the region supported by ESCAP. ESCAP has provided training to all 53 countries in regional workshops and provided additional technical support to around 20 countries that expressed interest in the accounts. The participants applauded the use of the SEEA implementation guide in countries starting to develop accounts. This guide includes several diagnostic tools to assess data availability and country priorities used to prepare an implementation plan and capacity building. The discussion centered in the importance of having a demand-driven approach to make the accounts useful and to establish a governance structure where the NSO is the national coordinator in the implementation of the accounts. The main challenges in the region are data availability and capacity (knowledge of GIS and environmental-economic accounts) and the need to have an extensive interagency collaboration with primary data producers and various experts' groups.
50. Participants discussed the presentation by Jessica Ying Chan of UNSD which provided updates on global SEEA implementation. The questionnaire for the 2020 Global Assessment, which has incorporated the new definition of implementation as agreed by the UNCEEA, has been sent to NSOs on 25 Sept. There has been steady uptake of the SEEA since 2017. Estimates carried out last year put the number of countries implementing the SEEA at more than 90. The analysis of the 2020 Global Assessment is still under way. Although 120 countries have responded, UNSD is still waiting for a response from a number of countries. In addition to the global assessment, it was also reported that UNCEEA has agreed to establish country-level SEEA focal points to enhance coordination, communication and capacity building.
51. Participants welcomed the work by UNSD in reporting on worldwide implementation and establishment of the SEEA focal points. It was pointed out that the information will be made available to the public, subject to country permission. The establishment of the SEEA focal points would also facilitate the engagement of national stakeholders in supporting the compilation and use of SEEA accounts for national and international policy include the monitoring of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

Implementation experiences in Western Asia

52. Participants discussed the presentation by Wafa Aboul Hosn of UNESCWA which shared the SEEA capacity building and implementation experiences in Western Asia. SDGs are considered an important initiative in the region, where the SEEA is being recommended as a tool for monitoring and compilation, in particular in the area of climate change and sustainable consumption and production. Waste and water

accounts are also considered another important initiative in the region. The discussion highlighted the importance of coordination and identification of entry points in countries to support the SEEA implementation in countries.

Experiences of the ENI SEIS II East project

53. Participants discussed the presentation by Jana Tafi of European of Environmental Agency which shared the SEEA work on land and ecosystem accounting in Eastern Partnership countries in Europe. Environmental accounting was identified as highly relevant for the environmental reporting process under the EU-funded ENI SEIS II project. Under this umbrella project, several Eastern Partnership countries have start compiling land and ecosystem accounts as part of regular reporting on the environment. The presentation highlighted the importance of a clear need of demand as a driver for implementation. Subsequent discussions centered around issues on digitalization and communication and pointed to the importance of implementation as a driving force to strengthen the national data ecosystem.

Implementation experiences in the European Union

54. Arturo de la Fuente of Eurostat introduced the presentation on the experience with the implementation of SEEA EEA in the European Union. The presentation highlighted the importance of NSOs in the development and implementation on the SEEA EEA. Ongoing efforts are currently being taken by Eurostat in engaging NSOs, and the trend has accelerated in the past few years. Various working groups established for the SEEA Central Framework process have also been used for the SEEA EEA process. Financial incentives and legislation are considered as part of the instruments used to advance the implementation work in Europe, both currently and in the future.

Sven Kaumanns thanked all participants and especially the moderators, discussants and authors of the 26th Meeting of the London Group on Environmental Accounting for their contribution and the secretariat for their support in making this meeting happen. The next meeting is scheduled for autumn 2021, either virtually or as in-person-meeting in Bonn (Germany).