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**Progress Report for the
Guidelines for the Compilation of
Water Accounts and Statistics**

Paper prepared by UNSD

(for discussion)

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A. Introduction

1. The UNCEEA has recognised the importance of developing compilation guidelines to assist countries with the development of water accounts and statistics, considering the high demand for supporting materials on the implementation of water accounts and statistics.
2. The Guidelines for the Compilation of Water Accounts and Statistics provide country experts and trainers with a comprehensive and reliable set of materials for assisting in the process of implementation of water accounts and statistics for developing a monitoring system for water policy design and evaluation.
3. The Guidelines are intended for use by the staff of National Statistics Offices, Water Ministries and Agencies, and other stakeholders in countries. They are a complement to the SEEA-Water, to the International Recommendations for Water Statistics (IRWS). They provide practical guidance for the collection and compilation of water data and several illustrative examples.

B. Scope of work

4. After the adoption of the SEEA-Water, the UNSC requested the United Nations Statistics Division to develop and submit to the Statistical Commission at its 39th session in 2008, an implementation strategy for the SEEA-Water, taking into account the fact that countries were at different stages of development of environment statistics and environmental-economic accounts.
5. After an extensive consultation with countries and discussions at the UNCEEA, the London Group on Environmental Accounting, as well as at six workshops or training programmes on water accounts held during 2007, the strategy for the implementation of the SEEA-Water was presented to the UNSC at its 39th session in 2008.
6. The strategy aims at integrating SEEA-Water into the national policy framework of integrated water resources management within national statistical systems. It puts great emphasis on linking the implementation of water accounts to users' demand as well as more broadly into national economic policies. The Statistics Division is working in close collaboration with countries and international agencies developing synergies and supporting statistical initiatives to improve water statistics programmes.
7. The implementation strategy comprises the following four components:

- (a) Development of the International Recommendations for Water Statistics (IRWS), accompanied by guidelines on supplementary data collection and compilation;
- (b) Development of training and promotional material;
- (c) Development of a technical cooperation programme consisting of regional activities as well as pilot projects in selected countries in various regions;
- (d) Harmonization of international data collection activities with the SEEA-Water concepts and definitions.

8. As part of the implementation strategy, the International Recommendations for Water Statistics (IRWS) were developed and after a thorough consultation process the IRWS were adopted by the UNSC at its 41st session in 2010.

9. Since 2010, the implementation strategy has focused on the development and strengthening of the processes for the collection and compilation of basic data, integration of data in the SEEA-Water framework for analysis and interpretation, and the derivation of policy relevant indicators. Considerable efforts have been made in understanding the data development processes in countries, definitions, classifications, as well as data availability and quality. Furthermore developing partnerships with the various data producers and users has been key in the success of the projects.

10. The recent elevation of the SEEA to a statistical standard is expected to renew interest in the implementation of environmental-economic accounts in countries, and in particular water accounts due to the importance of water for development, and the increasing water stress in many countries and regions. This renewed interest requires materials that translate the standards of the SEEA into guidance easy to follow by the staff in charge of the implementation.

C. Current status in the preparation of the Guidelines

11. The Guidelines follow the structure of the annotated outline of the Project Management Framework presented to the 7th Meeting of the UNCEEA in June 2012. The contents of the document are summarized in the following table:

	Key question answered	Main audience
Chapter 1	How to develop integrated information systems useful for water policy design and evaluation?	For people who want to have a quick overview. Sponsors, managers, and partners of the accounting projects should read this chapter.
Chapter 2	How do accounts work?	For people who want a more in depth understanding of the main assumptions in the accounting model.
Chapter 3	What data are needed? How are data incorporated in the accounts?	For the experts that will be collecting and compiling the data. Important for setting priorities in data collection and making requests of information to the different organizations that provide data.

Chapter 4	How are results interpreted and communicated to different audiences?	For the managers responsible for delivering the results of the accounts.
Chapter 5	How can water accounts become a continuous process?	For the managers in charge of the implementation of the accounts.
Master Exercise	How can the accounting concepts be more easily grasped?	For the experts that will be collecting and compiling the data. The exercise complements the explanation in chapters 2 and 3 with an exercise with different levels of difficulty.

12. In order to steer the process of elaboration of the Guidelines, as well as to provide inputs to the document, an **Editorial Board**, consisting of experts representing countries and organizations was formed. The editorial board had periodic meetings by teleconferences. The members of the Editorial Board include representatives from Australia, Mauritius, Mexico, Netherlands, Qatar, as well as from EEA, Eurostat, FAO Aquastat, OECD, UNECLAC, WHO, and UNWWAP,

13. A first draft of the document was reviewed during an **Expert Group Meeting** held in New York in November 2013. The expert group included representatives from the following countries and organizations: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Indonesia, Mauritius, Mexico, Qatar, Switzerland, Uganda, and USA, as well as, Eurostat, UNEP and World Health Organization.

14. A Master Exercise was developed in order to illustrate the different parts of the Guidelines. The Master Exercise, as well as some sections of the Guidelines, were tested in a workshop for Southern Mediterranean countries. The workshop was organized in partnership with the European Environment Agency and the Environment Institute of Austria in Vienna in April 2014. The following countries participated in the workshop: Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia.

15. The Guidelines and the Master Exercise have been circulated among practitioners from different countries and organizations in order to receive their feedback to improve them. A new draft of the document has been completed and is submitted to the UNCEEA for final comments.

D. Next steps

16. The Guidelines are conceived as a “living document” that will be enriched through their use in countries. They will be complemented with case studies, which will illustrate the different strategies for data collection, as well as the use of the accounts for policy design and evaluation.

17. The Guidelines for Water Accounts and Statistics will be part of the E-platform, which would also provide a forum for practitioners to exchange experiences and discuss issues in implementation. All these elements contribute to enhance the capacities of the countries for the compilation of environmental economic accounts.