

**Note on communication strategy for SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting**

1. As the draft of SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting (SEEA Part 2) is being completed, it is of paramount importance to implement a suitable communication strategy which assures that the document is properly presented to statisticians, policy makers, scientists, researchers and other interested parties. The aim of this communication strategy is to strike the right balance between the expected deliverables from studies on experimental ecosystem accounts, how such deliverables rely on already established scientific and ecological economics theory and practice, the issues to be addressed in implementing the studies and the benefits of taking an important coordinating role in these studies by national statistics offices. Of primary importance is for all parties to be aware not only of the upside of undertaking studies testing experimental ecosystem accounts, but also the limitations of current best practices. Furthermore communications with relevant parties should note the challenges in implementing SEEA Part 2. A realistic presentation of the present status of science and practice in support of ecosystem accounting in particular is key to achieving broad acceptance of those studies without overshadowing and undermining the implementation of SEEA Central Framework.

2. In order to achieve these communication goals, a number of initiatives have to be taken and are discussed in turn below.

3. **International Seminar “Towards Linking Ecosystems and Ecosystem Services to Economic and Human Activity” on SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting** will be a gathering of high level representatives from national statistical offices, from the scientific community, from environmental economics, and from international organizations to discuss SEEA Part 2. Its objective is to establish a dialogue and possibly long term partnerships whereby mutual understanding of issues related to ecosystem accounting are fostered. Bringing the different communities together will allow for a more comprehensive discussion of issues and the respective roles in developing scientifically based methodologies, mainstreaming a policy dialogue on statistics of experimental ecosystem accounts and ensuring coherence, consistency and scalability of country studies.

4. Among others, the seminar will provide a venue for discussing the state-of-the-art of the ecosystem accounting from the scientific perspective. During the seminar participants will also discuss in greater detail the extension of the statistical methodology presented in the SEEA Central Framework to the measurement of ecosystems, in particular the notion of statistical units for ecosystem accounting, the classification of ecosystem services and its linkages to the classification of flows in the Central Framework, the accounting structure, the measurement of ecosystem capital in physical terms and issues linked to valuation.

5. **Discussion Group on Valuation** which is led by the World Bank, aims to flesh out and get a broad consensus on some of the issues related to the valuation of ecosystem services and ecosystem capital. Members of the group include renowned environmental economists and national accountants. By including these experts as part of the discussion at this stage not only increases awareness of the work being done in the context of SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting but also allows engagement of the broader community of ecological economists who have been active in the field for many years.

6. **Consultation on Environmental Condition** aims at reaching the scientific community and build support on the issues related to ecosystem conditions. Selected experts will be asked to review Chapter 4 of the version of the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting which will be broadly circulated in November 2012.

7. **Communications with the technical experts in the official statistics community** is being pursued through at least two venues: through the editorial board for SEEA Part 2 and the London Group on Environmental Accounting. Unlike the International Seminar “Towards Linking Ecosystems and Ecosystem Services to Economic and Human Activity”, which includes high level representatives from national statistical offices, members of the editorial board and the London Group are specialists and practitioners in environmental accounting. Technical Experts will also have the opportunity to review the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting during November-December 2012 when the document will be broadly circulated before the International Seminar “Towards linking ecosystems and ecosystem services to economic and human activity”.

8. **Communications with heads of official statistics offices** will be also be a part of the outreach efforts. The chair of the UNCEEA and UNSD (pending approval) will send before the end of the year a letter to the heads of NSOs explaining the scope, content and rationale of the conceptual framework for the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting, the possible role of the NSOs and the challenges in testing the conceptual framework .

9. In addition, the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting will be circulated to the Heads of National Statistical Offices and heads of International Agencies to obtain inputs on the research document.

10. **Editorial Board of SEEA Part 2** is tasked with assisting the editor in the drafting the document. Members of the editorial board are experts from national statistical offices as well as international organizations. They play an important role in explaining the conceptual framework and the challenges of its implementation to their national statistical offices and beyond.

11. **The London Group on Environmental Accounting** is a group of experts from national statistical offices as well as international organizations which meets to discuss technical issues and share experiences on developing and implementing environmental accounts. The 17<sup>th</sup> London Group Meeting which met in Ottawa, Canada 2-4 October 2012, devoted two days of its three days meeting to discuss SEEA Part 2. The SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting conceptual framework was presented together with practical experiences in implementing the framework at the national and subnational level. Members of the London Group supported the work on the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting and expressed their interest to remain engaged and in particular address issues arising from testing the framework at its subsequent meetings. From a communications perspective, the London Group on Environmental Accounting represents one of the more important constituencies considering its role in testing SEEA Part 2. The meeting in Ottawa provided the group an opportunity to express its views on the document and shape its final outcome.

12. **Website.** Reaching a large audience in a timely manner requires that documents as well as other materials meant for public circulation are posted on time

and distributed as appropriate. The UNSD site on the revision of the SEEA will serve as the main repository for documents and will be updated on a regular basis. The draft of SEEA Part 2 will also be posted on the UNSD site for broad consultation by mid November.

13. **Briefing note on SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting.** A non-technical briefing note giving a broad overview of SEEA Part 2, and its applications and benefits will be produced by UNSD and partners. The briefing note will serve as a communication tool for both statisticians and policy makers. It would be posted on the web as well as distributed in meetings/conferences as needed. The briefing note will also be shared with NSO's who will be encouraged to use the note to inform relevant national partners such as environmental ministries and other policy setting agencies.

14. **Participation in international, regional and national initiatives on ecosystem accounting and ecosystem management approaches.** At the international and regional level, various initiatives are ongoing in which the UNCEEA and its members organizations are participating such as the World Bank WAVES project and European Environmental Agency (EEA) Simplified Ecosystem Accounting, UNEP The Economy of Ecosystem Biodiversity initiative (TEEB) and United Nations Poverty and Environment Initiatives (PEI). Additional requests to participate in other initiatives, including the invitation to participate in the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP) led by the Convention of Biodiversity, will be considered by the Bureau of the UNCEEA. .

15. **Outreach and coordination through national initiatives on the implementation of studies on ecosystem accounting** are critical. Through the World Bank, UNEP and UNDP programmes, several countries have expressed interest in undertaking studies on ecosystem accounts. The international seminar should elaborate a strategy for the testing of the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting, including elaborating on the institutional framework supporting the testing as well as on advancing the research on practical issues of implementation as well as methodological issues. Such strategy on testing ecosystem accounting could be submitted to the Statistical Commission in February 2013 by the UNCEEA along with the draft SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting for its consideration.