

**Seventeenth Meeting of the UN Committee of Experts on  
Environmental-Economic Accounting  
New York, 27-28 June 2022**



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS  
STATISTICS DIVISION  
UNITED NATIONS

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**Working Group on Coordination and Communication (Area A)  
Summary of activities**

Paper prepared by the Chair and Secretariat of the Working Group on Coordination and  
Communication

*(for discussion)*

# UNCEEA WORKING GROUP ON COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION(AREA A)

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## Background papers and resources

- [Programme of work](#)

## Area A – developments in 2021-22

The Working Group met regularly in 2021 and has focussed on identifying new and ongoing emerging issues and promoting coordination in these areas. A programme of work was developed, and approved by all members, which outlines the work Area A will pursue in the next five years to foster collaboration, integration and complementarity of programmes relevant to environmental economic accounting as well as design and implement practical strategies to promote the System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA) for emerging policy issues.

## Priority areas of work:

### Communication

Area A, with UNSD taking the lead, has continued to undertake efforts to better communicate the SEEA. UNSD has continued to produce the SEEA [quarterly newsletter](#) and update the [knowledge base](#) with SEEA-relevant publications. In addition, UNSD has continually updated the [SEEA website](#), including the event calendar, resources and content pages.

### Mainstreaming the SEEA

Expanding the use of the SEEA in areas such as the development and reporting of indicators, analysis and decision-making at national and global levels continues to be a key role for Area A. Areas of continued focus include climate change, sustainable finance, biodiversity, nature-based solutions, circular economy and oceans. For these ongoing and emerging issues, Area A continues to identify entry points and mechanisms to support the mainstreaming of the SEEA in relevant policy and statistical initiatives.

To better coordinate the work surrounding these initiatives, Area A began the process of reviewing the landscape of international committees, working groups and task forces currently working in areas related to environmental accounting and has begun evaluating current and potential linkages between these efforts. This landscape

assessment will help promote coordination with SEEA-relevant groups and reduce duplication of effort.

Currently, over twenty working groups or committees have been identified. These groups include both global and regional groups, management and technical groups, and include groups from different communities (statistics, biodiversity, finance, etc). Area A is in the process of refining the list and developing a visual to link the various groups. This landscape assessment will provide a mechanism for Area A members to prioritize their efforts.

### **Coordinate indicators and the conceptual development in the area of sustainable finance**

Area A members took part in a Joint OECD/UNECE seminar on SEEA implementation, including a session on sustainable finance. To further this work, the landscape assessment will enable a better understanding of the various initiatives Area A can engage with in this space. Other work in this space, such as the Finance Task Force of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, chaired by the World Bank, provide opportunities for the use of SEEA to tackle issues that will allow for the successful restoration of biodiversity.

### **Coordinate indicators and conceptual development in the area of circular economy**

Area A is engaging with the UNECE, the OECD Expert Group on a new generation of information for a Resource Efficient and Circular Economy (RECE-XG) and the Technical Committee on the SEEA Central Framework to facilitate collaboration in this space. In particular, Area A members include members from the aforementioned groups. Members of the SEEA community are actively participating in the drafting of statistical guidelines to measure the circular economy, including the development of a statistical framework based on the SEEA. It will be important that such a document will consider the views of the international community beyond UNECE region.

In addition, Area A, under the leadership of Statistics Canada and the UNECE, organized a side event at the World Circular Economy Forum, to highlight the importance of collaboration between national statistical offices and international partners in the space of circular economy and the importance of establishing high quality, comparable statistics. The virtual event was attended by over 150 participants and included panel discussions with experts in the field from various organizations and countries. All event materials and presentations can be found [here](#).

## **Coordinate indicators and conceptual development in the area of climate change**

Area A continues to coordinate with the UNECE related to advancing the use of SEEA to measure climate change indicators through such efforts as the high-level discussions of Chief Statisticians on official statistics for climate action organized by the UNECE as part of the 69th plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians in June 2021 and the annual UNECE Expert Fora for Producers and Users of Climate Change-Related Statistics. In addition, the UNECE has recently launched the Task Force on the role of NSOs in Achieving National Climate Objectives. Given the links between the Task Force's mandate and the UNCEEA's work programme, Area A is working with UNECE to ensure that the SEEA community is adequately represented in the Task Force.

Area A is also engaged with the G20 Data Gaps Initiative (which includes climate change as a key pillar) to ensure collaboration between the relevant UNCEEA subgroups. In particular, Areas B1 and Area C will be involved with the recommendations for physical energy flow and air emission accounts as well as expenditures and environmental taxes for mitigation and adaptation. A [side event](#) was organized during the 53<sup>rd</sup> session of the UN Statistical Commission to introduce the new DGI and the role of national statistical offices in its implementation.

Finally, Area A plans to reach out to other international organisations and their groups such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Expert Group of Environmental Statistics to facilitate collaboration and promote the SEEA.

## **Collaboration to provide a SEEA perspective on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework**

Area A maintains its working relationship with the CBD Secretariat to ensure that the SEEA is reflected in the monitoring framework. More recently, Area A has discussed how to best ensure that SEEA-related headline indicators for natural ecosystem extent and provisioning services are part of the monitoring framework. CBD Secretariat representation within Area A has continued to play a key role in ensuring that the SEEA community is informed of important events and opportunities to contribute. A [series of webinars](#) supporting the development and implementation of the monitoring framework of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework were organized jointly with the CBD, GEO BON and UNEP WCMC. Also, a [side event](#) was organized during the 53<sup>rd</sup> session of the UN Statistical Commission to discuss the role of national statistical offices and of the SEEA in the compilation of the indicators.

## **Conceptual development in the area of nature-based solutions**

Area A is engaging the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, led by UNEP and FAO, to ensure that the SEEA is properly reflected in the development of the monitoring framework and its implementation. UNSD has contracted a consultant to draft a paper on how the SEEA can be used to inform nature-based solutions.

## **Conceptual development in the area of beyond GDP**

Area A is working to engage and seek ways to participate in beyond GDP discussions to ensure the SEEA is being considered. The UN System Chief Executive Board for Coordination has established a working group that will draft a paper on a beyond GDP report which will be circulated for consultation. Area A will help coordinate input and response from the SEEA community. There is also active Area A participation in the Network of Economic Statisticians which is also looking at issues related to beyond GDP.

## **Other**

There are other SEEA-relevant initiatives where the work is being undertaken by different areas of the UNCEEA, that Area A actively monitors. In particular, the group keeps up to date on ocean accounting and sustainable tourism, which are undertaken by Area B2 and Area B1, respectively.

## **Questions for the Committee**

The UNCEEA is asked to consider:

- Possible prioritization of efforts for Area A, including any areas where the group should focus the landscape assessment;
- Possible prioritization of engagement with specific groups; and
- How Area A can ensure that SEEA-relevant outputs of different groups and organizations can be used by the global SEEA community.