

# 2018 PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE UNCEEA Working Group on Coordination (Area A)

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## Introduction

At its 12th meeting in June 2017, the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental Economic Accounting (UNCEEA) agreed to the establishment of a working group on coordination, led by Statistics Canada (Area A) and comprised of several UNCEEA members, in particular the leads of Area D on Capacity Building and Area E on Communication, to ensure synergies in the work programmes of the various groups.

This document outlines the Programme of Work for the UNCEEA and guides its activities for 2018.

## Mandate

To foster collaboration, integration and complementarity of programmes relevant to environmental economic accounting.

Statistics Canada chairs the working group meetings and leads its activities.

## Role of the lead

The role of the area lead is to:

- a) act as a champion and provide leadership in advancing the assigned area of work
- b) develop more detailed work plans and strategies to advance the given area of work
- c) coordinate with other members of the UNCEEA who could serve as additional resources in the assigned area of work

## Role of the members

The role of the members of the group is to:

- a) support the area lead in advancing the programme of work
- b) act as champion in a particular area of the work programme
- c) promote the SEEA in various groups/initiatives in which he/she is active in.

## Meeting frequency and logistics

The working group will be ongoing, with meetings taking place quarterly by Webex and/or telephone with possible side-meetings during the annual plenary of the UNCEEA in June. The first meeting was held on 21 November 2017 and future meetings will be held approximately every 3 months from that date.

## Membership

Members of the group include representatives from the following countries and organizations: Statistics Canada (Chair), Australian Bureau of Statistics (lead of Area E), IBGE-Brazil, INEGI-Mexico, CBS-Netherlands, Bureau of Economic Analysis-USA, Statistics South Africa (lead of Area C), SCB-Sweden and FAO, UNEP and UNSD.

A list of those organizations' representatives and their coordinates has been provided in Appendix A.

## Terms of Reference of the working group

The agreed terms of reference are attached in Appendix B.

## Work plan for 2018

### Key activities

As per the working group's terms of reference, its long-term mandate includes three main areas of work:

- *Mainstreaming the SEEA in reporting initiatives*: expanding the use of the SEEA in the development and reporting of indicators, analysis and decision-making at national and global levels;
- *Coordination of training and assistance*: making existing training tools more readily accessible through the UNSD website and where necessary, producing common tools to be used and disseminated widely. This will include a quality assurance process to ensure that various existing SEEA training materials properly convey concepts and methodologies.
- *Develop a strategy for mainstreaming the SEEA on emerging issues, such as the SDG indicators and climate change*: this work programme was previously under the domain of two subgroups in Area E. However, area leads need to be identified. Until area leads are identified, the programme of work is being re-distributed in the various UNCEEA work streams. For both SDG indicators and climate change, it is necessary to identify entry points and mechanisms to support the mainstreaming of the SEEA in relevant policy and statistical initiatives.

**For 2018, the working group will focus on the following three priorities:**

## *1. Developing a super calendar of SEEA events*

A number of capacity-building and training events relevant to environmental-economic accounting are underway, such as those developed by UNSD, the World Bank and by Eurostat.

The main objective of the super-calendar is to **bring together related information about SEEA capacity-building events, global events and initiatives in a single place** so that they are easily accessible. This would facilitate coordination and planning of events in the various regions of the world.

### *Approach*

The **super calendar will be housed on the UNSD SEEA** website and will play a central role in the consolidation and coordination strategy of the working group. It will act as a repository of information of when and where SEEA events are planned to take place. The calendar will feature past and present events and include significant documents including training materials.

### **Key tasks to be completed for supercalendar:**

- Upgrade the current UNSD SEEA website meetings page and test updates
- Determine the scope (e.g. type of events, training sessions, meetings) of the super calendar
- Post the super calendar and maintain its updates by sending quarterly requests for updates to relevant partners (e.g. London Group, NSOs, international organizations)
- Populate the supercalendar with all past events previously listed at: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/workshops.asp> and any other relevant events in scope
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### **Constraints and dependencies:**

- UNSD capacity to develop new web pages
- Organizations will have to send comprehensive lists and links/documents to be uploaded
- Contributions are received from the relevant organizations timely and on a regular basis
- Resources available for regular supercalendar maintenance will be crucial to ensure it remains up-to-date and include all relevant meetings from all partners

## *2. Quality assurance of SEEA training materials*

SEEA training and informational materials are not produced by one source. There are a number of international organizations working in the domain of environmental-economic accounting and several international organizations produce SEEA training and informational materials and engage in capacity building efforts. Additionally, several

National Statistical Offices (NSO) are involved in capacity building either on their own or in partnerships with international organizations or other NSOs.

The result is that there are several sets of teaching training and informational materials available that could be of use to a wider audience than the direct recipients of the training programmes in question.

In order to centralize and post all SEEA training material to the UNSD website, there is a need to first ensure quality and methodological coherence.

### *Approach*

The Working Group will act as a review board to coordinate the review of SEEA training materials to ensure the materials adhere to the standards put forth by the SEEA. The group will also select experts to provide the review of priority materials. Finally, the Working Group will engage with SEEA experts, such as the World Bank or the London Group, to learn from their work and avoid duplication.

The scope of the quality assurance review will be limited to training material and will not cover methodology or exploratory research, topics that will be covered by other groups such as the UNCEEA Technical Committees on SEEA CF and EEA.

### **Key tasks to be completed to ensure quality assurance and methodological coherence:**

- Conduct a survey of training materials currently available and identify i) which events and associated training materials should be posted on the super calendar and ii) determine which training materials should undergo a quality assurance review
- Identify a set of criteria to assess quality of material to be posted onto website
- Develop a board of experts to conduct reviews of selected training materials
- Liaise with authors of training material and provide review comments

### **Constraints and dependencies:**

- Review of documents will be dependent on board members' technical expertise, availability and competing demands
- Dependency on willingness on the part of training organizations to allow their material to be included on the proposed web platform or post all relevant course information on their own website
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### ***3. Ensuring SEEA presence in relevant reporting initiatives***

Priority areas where the Working Group could ensure that the SEEA is used as much as possible in the development of new international reporting initiatives, such as the climate change agenda and the SDG indicators<sup>1</sup>, need to be determined.

The Working Group will engage with international organizations involved in the development of international reporting initiatives to scope out those reporting initiatives in which the SEEA can be mainstreamed. It will also work to ensure that the various UNCEEA groups are as well positioned as possible to perform this work.

#### **Key tasks to ensure SEEA presence in relevant reporting initiatives:**

- Scope out relevant reporting initiatives to help determine the establishment of priorities for engagement and produce a report of findings, including list of experts and current activities. Examples include the UNFCCC revision and the WHO's work on the estimation of wastewater.
- Identify priority areas where incorporating SEEA concepts can have the highest impact
- Coordinate with UN Regional Commissions on existing reporting initiatives (e.g. UNECE climate change indicators, waste indicators) to ensure appropriate reference to SEEA
- Once it is established (later in 2018), establish a formal relationship with the UNCEEA SDG working group by inviting a representative from UNCEEA SDG to participate in meetings of the IAEG SDG Subgroup on Integration
- Review the terms of reference of the various groups working under the auspices of the UNCEEA (e.g. London Group on Environmental Accounting, Technical Committee on SEEA CF and Technical Committee on SEEA EEA) to ensure coherence and least amount of overlap possible and produce a short paper on findings and recommendations. The review will initially be limited to groups under the umbrella of the UNCEEA.
- Share minutes of meetings of this working group with other members of the UNCEEA and other groups addressing the other areas of work of the Committee
- Address overlap between UNCEEA working groups at annual meeting in June

#### **Constraints and dependencies:**

- Dependency on willingness on the part of organizations or working groups to willingly provide information on reporting initiatives and in a timely manner

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<sup>1</sup> Are those new indicators. You did not list them in your examples below)

## Outputs, major players and timeline for key deliverables

Key outputs, major players, desired outcomes and a timeline for main deliverables of the programme of work of the Working Group on Coordination are summarized in the table below.

<b>Output</b>	<b>Major players</b>	<b>Desired Outcome</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<b>Survey of SEEA training materials</b> currently available	<b>UNSD</b> to produce template requesting training materials/information; <b>UNCEEA Working Group on Coordination (WG)</b> and <b>Area Lead</b> to assist in assembling the report if necessary. WG members to determine which training materials should be reviewed for quality assurance.	Creation of an up to date central repository of knowledge on SEEA training material which is easy to find and accessible to trainers and teachers	Summer/Fall 2018
<b>Supercalendar</b>	<b>UNSD</b> to upgrade website to incorporate supercalendar and populate it with all past and upcoming training events (relevant partners to provide info); <b>WG</b> to determine type of events, meetings in scope for posting; <b>UNSD</b> and <b>Area Lead</b> to keep calendar up to date.	Completeness of supercalendar (identification of who is doing what); duplication avoidance	November 2018 (quarterly updates thereafter)
<b>Development of Board of Experts</b> for review of SEEA training materials	WG members to propose a board of experts in environmental accounting to review training materials	Quality assurance and methodological coherence of SEEA training initiatives and adherence to SEEA guidelines	Summer 2018

Short paper on analysis of the <b>terms of reference</b> of other <i>UNCEEA</i> <b>SEEA Governance Groups</b>	<b>Area Lead working with UNSD</b>	Greater coherence, reduced duplication of reporting requirements and respondent burden	Fall 2018
<b>Report of findings</b> on new and existing reporting initiatives	<b>WG</b> to provide input and coordinate with UN Regional Commissions; <b>Area Lead</b> to draft report recommending areas where integration of SEEA concepts is greatest importance. WG members to work with the organizers of priority reporting initiatives to incorporate SEEA principles.	Identification of priority areas where incorporation of SEEA concepts can have the highest impact; appropriate reference of SEEA in relevant reporting initiatives	Fall 2018
<b>Establishment of formal relationship with UNCEEA SDG Working Group</b>	<b>Area Lead and UNSD</b>	SEEA is used in relevant reporting initiatives	Winter 2018
<b>Regularly presenting</b> and discussing existing and new reporting initiatives and updates to supercalendar at UNCEEA meetings	Members of <b>WG</b> , including relevant <b>international organizations and NSOs</b>	Reduced overlap, greater coordination of reporting requirements; expansion of SEEA use in new initiatives; increased relevance of supercalendar	Quarterly virtual bureau meetings (Feb, May, Aug, Nov) and annual plenary session in June of every year

## Appendix A: list of participants and coordinates

André Loranger (Chair and official STC rep)	Canada	<a href="mailto:andre.loranger@canada.ca">andre.loranger@canada.ca</a>
Kevin Roberts	Canada	<a href="mailto:kevin.roberts@canada.ca">kevin.roberts@canada.ca</a>
Carolyn Cahill	Canada	<a href="mailto:carolyn.cahill@canada.ca">carolyn.cahill@canada.ca</a>
Norman Fyfe	Canada	<a href="mailto:norman.fyfe@canada.ca">norman.fyfe@canada.ca</a>
Ivo Havinga	UNSD	<a href="mailto:havinga@un.org">havinga@un.org</a>
Alessandra Alfieri	UNSD	<a href="mailto:alfieri@un.org">alfieri@un.org</a>
Jessica Ying Chan	UNSD	<a href="mailto:jessica.chan@un.org">jessica.chan@un.org</a>
Dennis Fixler	USA	<a href="mailto:dennis.fixler@bea.gov">dennis.fixler@bea.gov</a>
Joe De Beer	South Africa	<a href="mailto:JoeDB@statssa.gov.za">JoeDB@statssa.gov.za</a>
TBD	Mexico	<a href="mailto:rolando.ocampo@inegi.org.mx">rolando.ocampo@inegi.org.mx</a>
Lisa Wardlaw-Kelly	Australia	<a href="mailto:lisa.wardlaw-kelly@abs.gov.au">lisa.wardlaw-kelly@abs.gov.au</a>
Nancy Steinbach	Sweden	<a href="mailto:nancy.steinback@scb.se">nancy.steinback@scb.se</a>
Wadih Joao Scandar Neto	Brazil	<a href="mailto:wadih.neto@ibge.gov.br">wadih.neto@ibge.gov.br</a>
Jillian Campbell	UNEP	<a href="mailto:jillian.campbell@unep.org">jillian.campbell@unep.org</a>
Francesco Tubiello	FAO	<a href="mailto:francesco.tubiello@fao.org">francesco.tubiello@fao.org</a>
Gerard Eding	Netherlands	<a href="mailto:gj.eding@cbs.nl">gj.eding@cbs.nl</a>
Sjoerd Schenau/Bert Kroese	Netherlands	<a href="mailto:s.schenau@cbs.nl">s.schenau@cbs.nl</a> ; <a href="mailto:ah.kroese@cbs.nl">ah.kroese@cbs.nl</a>



# Appendix B: Terms of reference of the UNCEEA working group on Coordination (Area A)

## Mandate

To foster collaboration, integration and complementarity of programmes relevant to environmental-economic accounting.

## Objectives

Eurostat, OECD, World Bank and UNSD are the main international organizations working in the domain of environmental-economic accounting. In addition, several National Statistical Offices (NSO) are also involved in capacity-building either on their own or in partnerships with the international organizations or other NSOs. Furthermore, an increasing number of international agencies are developing concepts and statistical methods for emerging data and reporting initiatives in the area of environmental statistics. For these reasons, coordination is required to avoid response and other burdens on NSOs from competing demands on their resources, to help achieve aligned statistical methods, and to ensure that activities of the international organizations are complementary and resource-effective.

Specifically, there are several key areas of work included in the mandate of this group:

- Expanding use of SEEA in the development and reporting of indicators, on analysis, on decision-making
- Leveraging the use of training tools that have already produced in order to make them more readily accessible, and where necessary, to produce common tools to be used and disseminated widely

## Areas of focus and deliverables

### *Reporting initiatives*

The Working Group will work to ensure that SEEA guidelines are used as much as possible in the development of new international reporting initiatives, including initiatives such as the UNECE indicators on climate change and the SDG indicators. A lead within the working group for dealing with the SDG will be nominated, and will work in close collaboration with Area E. Statistics Canada will also coordinate with UN

regional commissions on existing reporting initiatives (i.e., climate change indicators, waste indicators) to ensure appropriate reference to SEEA.

### *Training and assistance*

The existence of different training programs is not considered a problem, since different audiences will need different materials tailored to their specific needs. The result is that there are several sets of teaching and information materials available. The most important need is not to coordinate the development of these materials, but rather a need to make them all available in one place so that they are easy to find and accessible to both trainers and students. Where necessary, new tools might also need to be developed.

In addition, there is a need for international agencies and NSOs to be aware of the training efforts already completed and underway in order to avoid duplication and to provide background for subsequent assistance. This information will be developed by the working group and will be made available via the UNSD's new website, which will contain both static and interactive elements.

### **Timeline**

The work group will be ongoing. A detailed work plan with timelines and deliverables will be drafted within the first three months of the first meeting of the group.

### **Meetings**

Statistics Canada will act as chair to the working group. Meetings will be quarterly, and will take place by telephone and/or Webex, with possible side-meetings during the yearly plenary of the UNCEEA.