SUMMARY REPORT FOR WORK-STREAM D ON SEEA CAPACITY BUILDING

A: Background:

This workstream of the UNCEEA, led by Statistics South Africa, aims to support the global targets for SEEA implementation. At the 47th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, the UNCEEA recommended the following two SEEA implementation targets:

- At least 100 countries with ongoing, well-resourced programmes in SEEA Central Framework accounting; and
- At least 50 countries with ongoing, well-resourced programmes in ecosystem accounting to support national decision-making;

Where 'SEEA being implemented in a country' is defined as - "a SEEA account must have been compiled and published at least once, and structural (i.e. regular budget) funds must have been allocated for repeat compilation and publication".

The forward work program includes four primary activities, namely:

1. Establishing regional coordinators in the Regional Commissions and developing programme of work
2. Producing a status report of SEEA implementation and a gap analysis with regards to implementation targets
3. Producing a status report of regional coordination mechanisms for SEEA implementation
4. Developing an annual event calendar for international capacity building initiatives

B: Progress since previous UNCEEA meeting:

Members of the workstream include the regional commissions (UNECE, ECLAC, ESCAP, ECA) and international agencies (World Bank, OECD, FAO, UNDP, UN Environment, UNSD). Members participated in two teleconferences held on 20 November 2017 and 11 April 2018 as available. Participants provided inputs via email if they could not attend.

Members supported the above four activities, although the idea of an event calendar (item 4) was not pursued as it overlapped with the work planned in Area A—Coordination. The main activities over the last year included a review of the originally proposed outputs of the workstream, discussion of the Global Assessment's draft results, obtaining ideas for data analysis and collecting information on capacity building initiatives undertaken and planned.

SEEA

1. The Global Assessment for 2017 was conducted and analysed relative to the 2014 assessment. Primary descriptive statistics were included in a background document for the UNSC 2018.

    Additional descriptive tables, graphs and maps were developed and will be presented at the June 2018 meeting of UNCEEA. In many cases, the data was drawn from a combination of the results of the 2017 Global Assessment and the results based on a survey of status reports of regional commissions and international agencies (see item 2 below).

    The intention is to map the demand for technical assistance with existing supply of assistance as a proxy for a gap analysis. This may provide opportunities for efficiency in capacity building, e.g. how can neighbouring countries be involved in initiatives.

2. An international coordination matrix was developed. In this case, regional commissions and international agencies were requested to provide inputs regarding their existing capacity building initiatives as well as planned projects for different recipient countries.

    This summary received wide support from group members and was driven by UNSD. The intention is to keep this a living document that will be centrally shared on the SEEA Confluence website and available to members.

C: Questions for discussion:

1. Do we need a protocol for how capacity building initiatives should be provided? This could include items such as:
    a. Use of SEEA nomenclature
    b. Use of approved training materials (linked to Area A)
    c. Update global calendar
    d. Communication through SEEA newsletter
    e. Other?
2. The Global Assessment is a useful tool to conduct periodically; how can it be improved? Improvements could include:
    a. Updating information obtained from secondary sources (providers of technical assistance)
    b. Communicating with agencies other than the national statistics offices and add the information (but if it is contradictory?).
3. What can be done to reach the target for SEEA (100 countries) and EEA (50 countries) implementation?

4. What remains for this workstream to be done before the next Global Assessment in 2020, in addition to annual updates of capacity building initiatives on the global calendar (this could also be automated with Area A—Coordination).
5. Should the work-stream try to involve other stakeholders (from both the central framework as well as the ecosystem perspective)?