

Fourteenth Meeting of the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting

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New York, USA

Area E: A Practical Strategy for the Application of Environmental Accounting to Emerging Policy

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1. BACKGROUND

Area E has been focused on finalising the development of foundational infrastructure to enable countries to produce communication material and messaging for their own SEEA accounts. Achievements since the 13th UNCEEAA meeting are:

- The Communication Strategy has been updated and is available from the UN SEEA website. This strategy provides principles and a framework to follow when considering how best to communicate SEEA outputs to various audiences.
- Regular newsletter communication has continued and there remains a healthy interest in contributing. Ensuring the SEEA News & Notes has a far reach and is of interest to a wide audience remains an ongoing focus.
- Updates to the UN SEEA website to improve content accessibility and visual appeal.
- Beginning the collection and collation of case studies which highlight instances of SEEA data being used to inform policy decisions.

The Group's attention is now turned to implementing the strategy to practically link SEEA accounts to current and emerging policy through the agreed 'case study' approach.

The focus of the Area E Session at the 14th UNCEEAA meeting will be on this 'case study' strategy. How best to develop it into something which will be useful in a practical sense, and which will move us collectively towards the goal of having SEEA data sought out and actively used for informing policy and other important decisions.

2. SESSION STRUCTURE

The session will begin by providing an overview of the case studies which have been collected by Area E to date. These will be grouped into policy areas which the data are informing, as well as into the SEEA thematic areas. At the time of writing there had been over 50 case studies submitted. We will begin the conversation around 'What now?' 'How do we make the best use of this information in a practical way which is meaningful

to everyone?' We will also be proposing the introduction of a SEEA tag line that can be used when referencing SEEA: "SEEA: Connecting the Pillars of Sustainability".

An update on progress with the UNSD GIZ project will be provided. The strategic objective of this project is to educate policy makers on how the application of SEEA can assist in making informed decisions on sustainability issues. A decision has been taken to focus on three topics: biodiversity, climate change and macroeconomic/finance applications. An editorial board is being established to oversee outputs.

Finally we will hear the experiences of two other organisations which are conducting similar case study exercises. John Maughan from Green Growth Knowledge Platform and Alison Fairbrass from University College London will talk about their work on SEEA and Natural Capital case studies. This will be followed by a presentation by Sonu Jain on the World Bank's WAVES experience.

Following the formal presentations, the session will conclude with a discussion to draw out the common policy imperatives for developing and utilising SEEA accounts, then collectively determining the most useful approach to take to meet those policy imperatives.

3. OUTCOMES SOUGHT

The outcomes sought from the Area E Session are:

- Formulation of a practical case study strategy to ensure that the SEEA provides data which is used to address emerging and current policy needs.
- An understanding of any similar processes which may be occurring and exploring opportunities to consolidate efforts and harness synergies.
- Put forward the concept of implementing a 'tag-line' for SEEA to help quickly articulate to non-technical audiences what SEEA is.