

MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE UN COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL ACCOUNTING

18 April 2024 teleconference

Meeting minutes

- **Present:** André Loranger (Chair), Augustine Akuoku-Asibey (Statistics Canada); Jonathon Khoo, Jacqui Vitas (Australian Bureau of Statistics); Sven Kaumanns (Federal Statistical Office of Germany and London Group on Environmental Accounting); Mandy Driver (South Africa); Sjoerd Schenau (Statistics Netherlands); Ian Townsend (UK Office of National Statistics); Arturo de la Fuente (Eurostat); Alessandra Alfieri (IMF); Catherine Van Rompaey (World Bank); Sarah Barahona (OECD); Sokol Vako (ESCAP-SIAP); Ilaria Di Matteo, Jessica Ying Chan, Marko Javorsek (UNSD)
- **Regrets:** MOSPI-India; Kenya National Bureau of Statistics; INEGI Mexico; Statistics New Zealand, Philippine Statistics Authority; FAO

1. RECAP OF THE 55TH SESSION OF THE UN STATISTICAL COMMISSION

- The Chair provided a brief recap of the SEEA-related outcomes of the 55th Session of the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC). Highlights included the endorsement of the update of the SEEA Central Framework; the endorsement of classifications and frameworks relevant to the SEEA such as the IUCN Global Ecosystem Typology; the UNSC's recognition of the importance of the UNCEEA's engagement in the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and the Data Gaps Initiative III; the work on global databases and capacity building; and the work programme of the London Group and their engagement in the update of the SEEA Central Framework.

2. UPDATE OF THE SEEA CENTRAL FRAMEWORK

- The Chair of the Technical Committee on the SEEA Central Framework (SEEA CF TC) provided a status update on the update process. The list of issues and prioritization are currently under review by the UNCEEA. After this review, the documents will undergo global consultation. The SEEA CF TC will seek to engage a broad range of stakeholders in the global consultation and will hopefully share some very preliminary results at the UNCEEA meeting in June. The final list of issues and project management framework will be sent to the UNSC for approval during their next session.
- It was suggested that the global consultation include some information on the overall timeline of the update, so that countries can begin planning their participation in the update.
- The SEEA CF TC plans to add additional countries to its membership so that a diverse range of country perspectives and experiences are taken into account with the update.

The SEEA CF TC is revising the final list of countries to invite, but potential countries include Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico, Estonia and Zambia. The Bureau welcomed the move to add additional countries to the SEEA CF TC.

3. TASK TEAM ON THE UNCEEA MANDATE/STRUCTURE

- The Chair presented the work of the Task Team on the UNCEEA Mandate/Structure. The Task Team is re-evaluating the mandate, structure and functioning of the Committee to better reflect recent developments and new approaches and priorities. The Task Team, which comprises the Chair, Secretariat, Area Leads and IMF, is focusing on a review of the UNCEEA ToR and Operational Guidelines, ways to facilitate better coordination between groups and a review of the working methods.
- The outcomes of the discussions of the task team will be brought to the Bureau at its next meeting; upon agreement by the Bureau, the proposed changes to the ToR and Operational Guidelines will be brought to the UNCEEA in June and submitted to the UNSC in 2025.
- It was noted that after the UNCEEA agrees on an updated ToR, groups related to the UNCEEA, such as the London Group, may also want to revisit their ToR to ensure alignment, as appropriate.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SEEA FOCAL POINTS NETWORK

- The Co-Chair of Area D presented the draft ToR for the SEEA Focal Points Network. The ToR is being developed with the aim to revitalize the SEEA Focal Points Network, which was established in 2020 to create a global network of national SEEA focal points.
- Area D launched a survey for current SEEA Focal Points on how they approach their current responsibilities/activities and potential new activities, which is being used as an input into the ToR.
- In principle, the Bureau endorsed the ToR but suggested that the document be shared with Area Leads and their respective working groups for information, as appropriate.
- **Actions:**
 - Interested Area Leads will share the ToR with their respective working groups for information as appropriate.

5. UPCOMING UNCEEA MEETING

- The 19th Meeting of the UNCEEA is confirmed to take place virtually from 25-26 June 2024. While it was hoped to have the meeting in-person, this will not be possible given the UN's liquidity crisis. The UNCEEA was notified with a save-the-date message.
- As with the past virtual UNCEEA meetings, the sessions are generally expected to have a short presentation followed by a discussion. The working groups will create short

background reports that outline the current and upcoming work and contain specific questions for discussion at the meeting.

- The Bureau discussed ways to foster active participation by all members at the UNCEEA meeting. In order to ensure that the views of all are expressed, it was suggested to request written comments on the background reports prior to the meeting, and during the meeting, additional efforts can be made to encourage all members to make interventions.
- It was noted that asking for written comments in advance of the meeting will necessitate having the meeting materials posted on the website at least a week and a half in advance. This will be further discussed between the Secretariat and the Chair.
- As the conclusions of the first day will be agreed upon at the beginning of the second day, it was suggested to move any topics which are more open to debate to the first day.
- **Actions:**
 - The Secretariat will revise the provisional programme based on the Bureau's feedback and circulate the programme for further comment and edits, with a deadline of **Friday, 30 April**.

6. TOUR DE TABLE

- The Area A Lead provided an update on the webinar series, the Uses of the SEEA for Policy. Over 200 people attended the [first webinar](#) on the link between the monitoring framework of the Global Biodiversity Framework and the SEEA. The [next webinar](#) will be held on 20 May and focus more on country experiences in compiling the SEEA Ecosystem Accounting.
- The Chair of the SEEA CF TC noted that the TC will soon review guidelines on plastics accounting, drafted by UNEP. In addition, the TC is participating in the revision of COFOG, and some members of the TC are part of the COFOG Task Team. It was noted that coordination within the SEEA community will be important to ensure that issues relevant to the SEEA are taken onboard in the revised COFOG.
- The Chair of the SEEA EA TC provided an update on the TC's involvement in the Global Biodiversity Framework. The TC has worked quite extensively on developing the metadata for two headline indicators of the monitoring framework, which was endorsed by the Ad-Hoc Technical Expert Group on Indicators in March. The metadata will be reviewed at the twenty-sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) in May and then presented to the COP in October. It was suggested that Area B2 and Area D coordinate on supporting countries in implementing the monitoring framework.
- OECD provided an update on Area C. The global questionnaires for air emissions and physical energy flow accounts are being revised for this year's data collection. In

addition, the Working Group has recently been discussing how to proceed on water and land cover accounts, which will be discussed at the next UNCEEA meeting.