

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

15 September 2022 teleconference

Meeting minutes

- **Present:** Greg Peterson (Interim UNCEEA Chair, Statistics Canada); Augustine Akuoko-Asibey, Carolyn Cahill, Jeff Fritzsche, Mariam Iqbal (Statistics Canada); Sjoerd Schenau (Statistics Netherlands); Sven Kaumanns (Destatis, Germany and London Group on Environmental Accounting); Rakesh Maurya (MOSPI, India); Eduardo de la Torre (INEGI-Mexico); Christine Magu (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics); Rachael Milicich (Statistics New Zealand); Mandy Driver (SANBI, South Africa); Jo Evans, Rosie Maslin (UK Office of National Statistics); Paulo Lourenco Dias Nunes, Valentina Ramaschiello (FAO); Roberto Astolfi, Sarah Barahona, Myriam Linster (OECD); Sokol Vako (ESCAP – SIAP); Arturo de la Fuente (Eurostat); P. Bhanumati (IMF); Alessandra Alfieri, Jessica Ying Chan, Julian Chow (UNSD)
- **Regrets:** Australia Bureau of Statistics, Philippine Statistical Authority, World Bank

1. SIXTH POLICY FORUM ON NATURAL CAPITAL DATA FOR BETTER DECISION MAKING

- Co-organized by the World Bank’s Global Program on Sustainability and UNSD, the Sixth Policy Forum on Natural Capital Data for Better Decision Making [will be held virtually 2-3 November](#). The theme is Financing for Nature – data and analytics for financial and policy decisions. The Forum will discuss the role of natural capital and ecosystem services data and analytics in investment and policy decisions at both the private and public sector level.
- UNSD is organizing the first session of Day 2 which will focus on bringing together the public and private sectors to discuss challenges and opportunities for aligning policies with nature and climate resilient development, as well as creating an enabling environment for directing investments away from harmful activities. Tentative speakers include participants from BIOFIN, the Ministry of Finance of Kenya, the United States and IPSASB.
- The session will also include a presentation of a background paper for the Forum which will look at how specifically natural capital accounting and the SEEA relates to sustainable finance.
- **Action item:** UNSD to share the draft background paper with the Bureau and relevant working groups of the Committee when it is available (mid-October).

2. DATA GAPS INITIATIVE III (DGI-III)

- The IMF provided a short summary of the Inter-Agency Group on Economic and Financial Statistics (IAG) Global Workshop on the DGI-III which was held virtually on 13-14 September.
- The DGI-III workplan was presented to the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBGs) in July 2022 for endorsement. However, the FMCBGs requested a more fine-tuned workplan before endorsement. Thus, the goal of the workshop was to finalize the workplan, which was revised based on country feedback. Based on the discussions during the workshop, the workplan will be finalized and sent to the Indonesian presidency by the end of September.
- It was noted that there was some political resistance to the first recommendation on air emission accounts and carbon footprints, and some countries suggested the use of UNFCCC inventories instead of the air emission accounts.
- It was agreed that work on the first recommendation would need to involve UNFCCC, particularly in terms of communicating with countries and explaining the complementarity of the accounts to the inventories.

3. COP-15

- In preparation for the COP-15, a meeting on indicators for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF) was held in July 2022 in Bonn. Unfortunately, there was little representation from national statistical offices during this meeting.
- Since the indicators meeting, there have been additional indicators added and changes to the wording of existing indicators. These changes will be discussed within the UNCEEA Working Group on Indicators.
- The monitoring framework will mainly be discussed prior to the actual COP, during the [Fifth Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group](#) (OEWG) from 3-5 December 2022. It was suggested that national statistical offices reach out to their CBD focal points prior to the OEWG and COP to make the case for the SEEA.
- UNSD will hold a side event during the COP on the SEEA. Bureau members suggested to feature speakers from the policy side during the side event, in addition to those from national statistical offices. Bureau members provided helpful suggestions on possible speakers, including those from Mexico, New Zealand and South Africa.
- **Action item:** UNSD to organize a meeting with Bureau members who may be able to help shape the COP-15 side event.

4. TOUR DE TABLE

- Area A: The group has been meeting regularly to keep abreast of priority issues and upcoming events, including the Sixth Policy Forum on Natural Capital Data for Better

Decision Making, COP-15 and the UNECE Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Climate Change-Related Statistics. It was noted that a consultant has been hired to write a paper on using the SEEA for nature-based solutions, which will be presented during the UNECE Expert Forum.

- Area B1: The group is actively participating in the updates of international classifications by reviewing CPC, ISIC and CEA proposals. Area B1 is also participating in the update of SIEC, which recently started up. In addition, Area B1 plans to soon finalize the technical notes on EGSS and EPEA.
- Area B2: The Task Teams on Ocean and Forest have been meeting regularly. The Forest Task Team is focusing on extent and mapping; condition and carbon links; and policy uses of forest accounts. The Ocean Task Team is focusing on concepts and methods of ocean accounts on the basis of an agreed research agenda, including the definition of ocean activities and expenditures, the definition of spatial ocean units and measurement of pressure on ocean; and data and policy applications for ocean accounting.
- Area C: UNSD and OECD have recently completed piloting of the global air emission and energy questionnaires. The draft questionnaires and results of the pilot will be summarized in a document and sent to the SEEA Central Framework Technical Committee and then the UNCEEA for endorsement. For material flow, UNEP has recently begun global data collection. On land, Area C will hold an expert meeting in December to focus on how to move forward with global data collection for land cover accounts. On water, OECD and Eurostat are collaborating to review the water questionnaire to see if it is possible to populate simple water accounts. Area C will review the results of this exercise, which will then be shared with the UNCEEA.
- Area D: Area D is now holding quarterly meetings to coordinate capacity building activities. Two of the main activities include the Global Assessment and an update of the implementation guide. The abbreviated Global Assessment was sent to countries in September, and the group will soon turn its attention to updating the implementation guide.
- Area E: Based on an assessment of current business accounting initiatives, the group will focus its attentions on the Task Force for Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD), the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) and the EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). It was also noted that UNSD recently met with a representative from the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) in New York; GRI is planning a biodiversity standard, which could also be reviewed by the group.

5. AOB

- Bureau members congratulated the Interim Chair, Greg Peterson, on his upcoming retirement from Statistics Canada in late October. Members thanked the Interim Chair for his leadership of both Area A and the wider UNCEEA.