



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
STATISTICS DIVISION
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System of
Environmental
Economic
Accounting

SEEA Central Framework update

Scoping note for issue A8: “Explicitly linking/integrating environmental activity accounts (ch4), asset accounts (ch5) and flow accounts (ch3).”

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Finalized in September 2025.

Note: This Scoping Note has been prepared in the context of the SEEA Central Framework update, mandated by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 2024. A set of [29 issues](#) was identified for the update process and endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 2025. As an initial step, Scoping Notes were developed for each issue to elaborate on its description and provide a common understanding of the work required to fully investigate and formulate recommendations for the updated SEEA Central Framework. Each Scoping Note was prepared by a lead author and discussed in the relevant Task Team. They were subsequently reviewed by the SEEA CF Technical Committee and the UNCEEA, and approved by the SEEA CF Technical Committee.

1 Background to the issue

1. The short description of issue A8 “Explicitly linking/integrating environmental activity accounts, asset accounts and flow accounts” from October 2024 is:

“Asset, flow and environmental activity accounts are now all described separately in the SEEA, where the links and integration of the different accounts is one of our key selling points. While this is currently mentioned in Chapters 2 and 6, the linkages could be described and highlighted more regularly through the chapters.”

2. Paragraph 2.26 defines the linked tables and accounts within the SEEA CF as:
 - a. Supply use tables in physical and monetary terms showing natural inputs, products and residuals;
 - b. Asset accounts for individual environmental assets in physical and monetary terms;
 - c. Sequence of economic accounts highlighting depletion-adjusted economic aggregates;
 - d. Functional accounts recording transactions and other information about economic activities undertaken for environmental purposes.
3. Paragraph 2.27 states that “...the strength of the (accounts) stems from the consistent application of definitions and classifications for stocks, flows and economic units across different types of environment assets and different environmental dimensions...”
4. Paragraph 2.28 also suggests that implementation does not require compilation of every table and account.
5. Paragraph 2.29 sets out the context and one of the problems with the current layout of an integrated account:
 - a. “2.29 The present section introduces the different tables that are part of the Central Framework and demonstrates the nature of the integration between them. The explanation is stylized, as the reality is more complex, but the basic logic and intent of the approach examined in this section apply throughout the Central Framework.”
6. Section 6.2 details the links between the accounts:
 - a. Section 6.2.2, Integration of supply and use tables in physical and monetary terms
 - b. Section 6.2.3, Integration of asset accounts and supply and use tables
 - c. Section 6.2.4, The sequence of economic accounts
 - d. Section 6.2.5, Functional accounts
7. References to integration are dispersed through the SEEA CF, though these are generally ‘light touch’ giving only advice on these should be included in asset accounts of the same theme.

2 Motivation for considering a change to the SEEA Central Framework

8. These are small amounts of linkage information scattered throughout the chapters of the SEEA CF, usually as an inclusion in a paragraph or as an add-on to a particular topic.

9. Changes that impact on the links between the calculation of depletion, monetary environmental asset accounts and the sequence of economic accounts from the SNA 2025 revision need to be updated.
10. There are concepts missing in the links between accounts and tables. As well as if the links between SEEA CF and SEEA EA, these should be included in these accounts and tables:
 - a. No concept on how expenditure in the functional accounts (EPEA) builds on the physical or value of restored ecosystems. The main suggested link between supply use tables and the functional accounts are for comparisons between resource use and protection expenditure only. However no guidance on how or what parts of the accounts should be linked exist.
 - b. Clarity is missing around the link between assets that sit outside the production boundary and their appearance in monetary tables such as asset accounts or balance sheets (such as harvest of native trees). This is handled within the SNA monetary accounts
 - c. Accumulation of residuals is recommended in Table 6.2 without any description of the method.
11. The only diagram demonstrating the links and terminology between the accounts and tables is Table 6.2 Connections between the supply and use tables and asset accounts.

3 Nature of the proposed change and research questions

12. The broad proposals for consideration are:
 - a. If the SEEA should increase the detail (for example, more direct links, tables, diagrams) about linkages between relevant accounts in each account by chapter, or;
 - b. if SEEA should maintain and potentially strengthen the wording in section 6.2, and providing stronger references to the section in each of the accounts.
 - c. An alternative to this view is that 6.2 should be re-located to chapter 2.
 - d. If the links between the accounts and tables need any review after the SNA2025 revision, for example if the sequence of accounts could be modified to reflect the current treatment of depletion and include the extension to degradation as described by SEEA EA (see also points in 10a, 10b, 10c above).
13. Proposals 12a and 12b,c would suggest minor changes in content, improvements in links between terms used in each of the chapters (extraction generally means natural inputs for instance). Proposal 12d would need input from issue A9 to be completed.
14. After discussion with the Task Team the following suggestions were offered for the guidance note:
 - a. Start with an account design model (see image from the 1993 SEEA CF below).
 - b. Consider as a part of the account design process if SEEA CF has a complete set of accounts in the right format, for example does the manual need a SEEA based balance sheet linked to a range of asset accounts, a SEEA capital account with depletions links to the flow accounts and monetisation of each of the accounts.
 - c. Will need to have a greater conversation on the links to depletion and degradation leveraging off adjustments from Issue A9 (SNA overlaps)

- b. Issue A2 – Indicators. Any changes in the recommendations for indicators would likely need to be considered in the context of linked SEEA CF accounts.
- c. Issue A6 – Introduction of thematic accounts and strengthening the link to policy. One of the key gaps in creating accounts for use in policy is a clear link between monetary, physical and asset information.
- d. Issue A9 – Consistency with 2025 SNA revision issues. There are overlaps with changes to SNA 2025 such as the deduction of depletion in ‘net’ based aggregates. Changes to the treatment of biological resources will need consideration.
- e. Issue B1 – Description of PSUTs. Maintain consistency between any proposed changes in terminology and linkage terms.
- f. Issue B5 – Differences between PSUTs and EW-MFA. Incorporate any recommendations in terminology. See if there is any stronger links for monetary and physical supply use tables that can be used.
- g. Issue C1 – Inclusion of the Classification of Environmental Purposes. Test to see if the changes impact on the recommendations for linking expenditure accounts to physical accounts.
- h. Issue C2 – Inclusion of the integrated framework for monetary accounts. Test for impacts on wording.
- i. Issue C3 – Extending the scope of environmental activities. Answering the question if these new expenditures are included in the 3 (or 4) key accounts and tables for SEEA CF. Will text be needed to link these to particular components of the accounts or other data?
- j. Issue C6 – Inclusion of potentially environmentally damaging subsidies/related transfers. Should these be included in the sequence of economic accounts?
- k. Issue C8 – Incorporation of sustainable finance into an accounting framework. Should these be included in SEEA CF monetary asset accounts? Should the sub accounts be linked to physical changes in the SEEA CF or SEEA EA?
- l. Issue D1 - Inclusion of the carbon stock account. Needs to be included in the list of accounts, will air emissions need linkage to the carbon stock account clarified as a part of this issue?
- m. Issue D3 – Inclusion of physical produced assets. Will the sequence of economic accounts link to physical produced assets? As mentioned above, residuals accumulation in the environment is included in table 6.1, but not described.
- n. Issue D4 – Consideration of water as a produced asset. Implications for this in the issue A8 would include understanding if there are changes in assets at an earlier stage in the hydrological process, the creation and link to a new asset account. Another issue is if we want consistency between the asset accounts, should all extractions be considered as inventory until transformed into a product? In the least the monetary and physical flows would need to be redesigned and linked

5 Existing materials

16. Potential materials that may be considered in developing a Guidance note include (but are not limited to):
 - a. Research and papers on linking the accounts for the previous SEEA CF process and from London Group papers that have attempted to address this (pending analysis in the guidance note).
 - b. Search for case studies on countries that have linked Supply Use tables and asset accounts.
17. In developing a Guidance note it will be necessary to identify the relevant experts and stakeholders for the purposes of both drafting the content of the note and also ensuring appropriately wide consultation. These experts and stakeholders have not been identified at this stage.