

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

5 March 2025 – in person teleconference with remote connection

Meeting minutes

- **Present:** André Loranger (Chair); Jennifer Withington (Statistics Canada); David Gruen (ABS, Australia); Kirti Nandikishor Gaikwad (MOPSI, India); Rachael Milicich (Statistics New Zealand); Richard Heys (ONS, United Kingdom); Mariana Kotzeva (Eurostat); Alessandra Alfieri (IMF); Steve MacFeely and Jorrit Zwijnenburg (OECD); Georgina Alcantar (UN ECLAC); Wafa Aboul Hosn (UN ESCWA); Stefan Schweinfest, Ilaria Di Matteo, Marko Javorsek, Elsa Begne De Larrea (UNSD)
- **Remote:** Sven Kaumanns (Federal Statistical Office of Germany and London Group on Environmental Accounting); Federico Gonzalez Medrano, Raul Figueroa, Virigina Del Campo Sanchez, Jesarela Lopez Aguilar, Mauricio Marquez Corona (INEGI, Mexico); Benjamin Kisiavuki Avusevwa (KNBS, Kenya); Sjoerd Schenau (Statistics Netherlands and Chair of the UNCEEA Technical Committee on the SEEA CF), Ian Townsend (ONS, United Kingdom); Arturo De La Fuente (Eurostat)

1. - INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

- Stefan Schweinfest, Director of UNSD gave short introductory remarks. He highlighted the work of the UNCEEA in advancing the SEEA and opportunities to further mainstreaming the SEEA in the ongoing discussion on beyond GDP and the broader development agenda. He noted that in the current context of reduced financial and human resources, it is particularly important to focus on priorities and find ways to collaborate even more than before. The discussion on positioning the SEEA in ongoing global initiatives is thus very important. He also mentioned that the discussion on the mandate and governance of the UNCEEA is very timely. The provision for establishing a Co-chairing arrangement (which is fairly common in the various UN groups) and the establishment of a high-level Steering group seem very good elements that will strengthen the Committee.
- André Loranger welcomed the Bureau members and introduced the agenda.

2. - POSITIONING THE SEEA IN ONGOING GLOBAL INITIATIVES

- André Loranger highlighted the work of Area A on Communication, which focuses on developing and maintaining a landscape assessment to identify synergies, opportunities for coordination, collaboration, and mainstreaming the SEEA with other work programs. The SEEA, by nature, is an integrated framework, and there is a continuous effort to integrate and coordinate to foster the development of an integrated information system that is fit for purpose.

- Some ongoing global initiatives that should be on the Committee's radar include, but are not limited to, Beyond GDP, the implementation of the 2025 SNA, the development of the Common Statistical Framework for Disaster-related Statistics by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics, climate change, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the UN Ocean Conference 2025, etc.
- A general question for the bureau was how to develop connections to these various initiatives and how the Committee can better communicate the usefulness of the SEEA for these initiatives.
- Richard Heys, Co-Chair of the Expert Group on Wellbeing Measurement, explained that the Group is working on developing briefing notes to support the creation of a framework for inclusive and sustainable wellbeing and contribute to the discussion of the High-Level Panel on Beyond GDP. The group is considering a proposal to form a task team on the environment, which could be an area of collaboration with the UNCEEA.
- It was mentioned that it is important to communicate with users not only to inform them of the usefulness of the SEEA for policy and decision making, but also to understand the user needs so that the SEEA can be more responsive. To this end, the update of the SEEA CF provides an opportunity to consult with the broader users community both during the technical discussion on the guidance notes but also during the global consultation phase.
- The Bureau recommended strong engagement with users during the SEEA CF update process and suggested to consider the organization of user conferences during the update process.

3. - UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF SEEA IMPLEMENTATION

- UNSD provided an overview of the SEEA implementation based on the results of the 2024 Global Assessment of Environmental-Economic Accounting and Supporting Statistics. Overall, there is a growing uptake of the SEEA in countries, with 94 countries implementing the SEEA in 2024. It was noted that although the outlook is positive, there should be a continuous effort to support countries to institutionalize the compilation of the accounts especially during the update process to maintain momentum.

4. NEW MANDATE OF THE UNCEEA

- André Loranger provided a brief overview of the new elements of the updated mandate and governance of the UNCEEA. In particular, he highlighted the formalization of a high-level Steering Group which will usually meet at the sideline of the UNSC in NY and will be attended by senior delegates from the NSOs, replacing the current Bureau

meetings. The Steering group provides an opportunity to have more strategic discussions on the work of the UNCEEA and it is expected to meet twice a year: a physical meeting in NY during the UNSC and a virtual meeting in September (dates to be confirmed). He indicated the intention to elect a Co-chair of the Committee and made a call for interested members to inform the Secretariat.

5. - DISCUSSION ON THE UNCEEA REPORT AT THE UN STATISTICAL COMMISSION

- The Bureau reviewed the main points for discussion at the UNSC related to the UNCEEA report. Key decisions are expected on the endorsement of the list of issues and the update process for the SEEA Central Framework, and on the adoption of the Committee's updated mandate and governance.
- The Bureau thanked Eurostat for providing a grant and IMF for securing some funds to support the update process.