

CONCEPT NOTE FOR SEEA FOCAL POINTS

Introduction

At the 51st session of the UN Statistical Commission, the Commission “noted the importance of regional collaboration, communities of practice, blended learning workshops, country technical support and a stepwise approach to ensure that the implementation targets are met by the end of 2020” [[E/CN.3/2020/37](#)]. Increasing implementation of the SEEA will rely on enhanced coordination within countries and communication among the various international, regional and national stakeholders. The ability of the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEA)¹ and UN Regional Commissions to effectively monitor and report progress will be instrumental in effectively increasing implementation.

In addition, as the UNCEEA makes progress towards establishing global databases based on national data sets for the SEEA, the Committee will need to regularly communicate with countries in relation to the collection of available national data. Furthermore, communication may be needed to validate data estimated by international organizations. Given the importance of obtaining country consent of these data sets, establishing agreed lines of communication is key. All in all, given the increased communication needs for capacity building and data validation related to the SEEA, there is need to ensure streamlined communication amongst all stakeholders. It is in this context that the UNCEEA Working Group on Capacity Building is establishing country-level SEEA focal points.

Finally, greater coordination in mainstreaming the use of the SEEA for policy is needed. At its 51st Session, the UN Statistical Commission noted the importance of mainstreaming the SEEA for various initiatives, including the Sustainable Development Goals, climate change, the circular economy, the ocean agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and sustainable tourism. It furthermore stressed the importance of mainstreaming the SEEA for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Coordinating the participation of the statistical community in these initiatives will be key to further mainstreaming of the SEEA.

Role and profile of country focal points

Communication with countries is currently undertaken through the Chief Statistician or head of agency. Considering the current work programme of the SEEA, which focuses on increased coordination at the country level, the development of databases, communication of the use of the SEEA for the development of indicators including SDG indicators and development and revision of methodologies, it is important that focal point(s) in countries are identified. These focal point(s) will be responsible for coordinating country-level responses to the international community.

¹ The UNCEEA functions as an intergovernmental body to provide overall vision, coordination, prioritization and direction in the field of environmental economic accounting and supporting statistics. The UNCEEA was established by the UN Statistical Commission at its 36th session in March 2005.

The focal point (one or multiple persons) should be at the management level of the organization and able to undertake activities of coordination with other agencies and institutions. They should have broad knowledge of the SEEA and be the person(s) responsible for designing and driving forward the strategy for SEEA implementation and use at a high-level and interacting with stakeholders. The focal point(s) will serve as a first point of contact to address requests and questions related to the SEEA, distributing them to the relevant people in the country and ensure follow-up. The focal point may be from any office or ministry. Depending on the country context, it may be the case that one focal point is from the national statistical office or agency responsible for the accounts, and other(s) from different agencies. In some cases, countries may want to establish a secondary, more technical focal point who can undertake follow up actions as needed.

As focal point(s), this person will serve as the first point of contact to follow up on matters including (but not limited to):

- Country updates on compilation and programme implementation
- Responses to the Global Assessment on Environmental-Economic Accounting and Supporting Statistics
- Validation of SDG indicator [15.9.1](#)
- Data validation of country estimates for global databases
- Transmission of national datasets for global databases
- Communication of the relevance of the SEEA for monitoring and evaluation of existing processes (e.g. post-2020 global biodiversity framework and CBD, land degradation and UNCCD, climate change and UNFCCC)
- Dissemination and gathering of country views on new manuals and standards, including the [revision of the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting](#)
- Coordinating with SDG focal points on SEEA matters, as necessary

Likewise, the UNCEEA and UN Regional Commissions will regularly update the focal point on relevant issues as necessary.