

PROPOSAL FOR UPDATED UNCEEA DEFINITION OF SEEA IMPLEMENTATION

Background

The current note proposes an updated definition of SEEA implementation. The [existing definition of SEEA implementation](#) was agreed during the 11th Meeting of the UNCEEA and lays out two conditions of implementation. A country has implemented the SEEA if 1) one or more SEEA accounts have been compiled and published at least once, and 2) has structural (i.e. regular budget) funds allocated for repeat compilation and publication. This definition of implementation is relatively strict and does not provide a full picture of progress in countries. At the same time, providing information on SEEA implementation has never been more important. SEEA implementation status regularly informs capacity building efforts, informing international organizations and countries of critical gaps in implementation. Implementation status is also key to measuring progress towards the Committee's 2020 implementation targets. More recently, SEEA implementation has become part of [SDG indicator 15.9.1](#), which looks at progress towards Aichi Target 2 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and SDG indicator 12.b.1 which looks at tools to monitor sustainable tourism through implementation of the Tourism Satellite Account and the SEEA.

In recognition of the need for a more nuanced definition of SEEA implementation that does not downplay the progress made in implementation, the Committee agreed to update its definition of implementation during its 15th meeting earlier this year. In particular, the Committee “welcomed the idea of a tiered approach to implementation.” This note proposes such a definition.

Proposed definition of implementation

It is proposed to define implementation in three progressive stages. These stages broadly reflect the Generic Statistical Business Process Model.¹

Stage I: Compilation

A country falls into the compilation stage if it has compiled at least one account (which is consistent with the SEEA) over the past five years.

For this stage, the compiled accounts do not need to be published, and they may be regarded as pilot accounts. This stage sets a lower barrier for entry, but in doing so, acknowledges the fact that even unpublished SEEA accounts can provide policymakers with relevant information, and that compilation itself is an achievement, particularly in countries with few resources. In

¹ <https://statswiki.unece.org/display/GSBPM/Generic+Statistical+Business+Process+Model>

addition, a time frame of five years is specified. This time frame ensures that the compilation has been relatively recent while at the same time acknowledging the time and effort it takes to move from compilation to dissemination.

In addition, compilation may be done by a government agency (or agencies) *or* by other institutions (e.g. academia, research institutions)—provided that the government has endorsed the compiled accounts.

Stage II: Dissemination

A country falls into the dissemination stage if it has compiled and published at least one account within the past five years.

If, at the time of the assessment, the country has compiled and published at least one account within the past five years, they fall into the dissemination stage. In order to fall into this stage, the disseminated accounts should be readily accessible to the public.

While countries falling into this category have disseminated their accounts, they do not compile and disseminate their accounts on a regular basis. Again, a time frame of five years is specified. This time frame ensures that the dissemination has been relatively recent while at the same time acknowledging the time and effort it takes to move to regular production and dissemination.

Stage III: Regular compilation and dissemination

A country falls into the regular compilation and dissemination stage if, at the time of the Assessment, regularly publishes at least one account. Regularly published accounts are compiled and published according to a scheduled production cycle (which may differ by account).

A country falls into this stage if it regularly compiles and publishes at least one account. In other words, SEEA compilation has become part of the regular statistical production and dissemination process. This definition does not specify the frequency at which the accounts must be published.

This definition deviates from the previous definition of implementation in that it does not include an element of funding. This is because countries have had differing understandings of the term regular/structural funding in the past. In many cases, whether structural funds or regular budget funds are allocated to SEEA implementation is not always clear because structural funding may mean different things at different institutions. In addition, it is possible that funding comes from different sources and may not be regular, but over a long period of time, with the compilation eventually absorbed into the regular work programme.

Next steps

The definition of implementation will be embedded in the upcoming 2020 Global Assessment on Environmental-Economic Accounting and Supporting Statistics which will be sent in early fall of this year. In addition, any changes to the definition of implementation will be clarified in the

metadata of SDG indicator 15.9.1 through submitting these changes to the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators following the appropriate process.