



System of Environmental- Economic Accounting SEEA

National Seminar on the
System of Environmental-Economic Accounting
February 5, 2014, Castries, Saint Lucia

Ivo Havinga
United Nations Statistics Division



Policy settings

- Post-2015 UN development agenda/SDGs
- Barbados Action Plan and Mauritius strategy of implementation
- Green Growth/Green Economy
- Broader measures of progress/Beyond GDP
- Natural Capital Accounting/ WAVES
- Aichi targets (e.g. Target 2)
- Poverty and environment
- TEEB





Sustainable development goals



We are determined to reinvigorate political will and to raise the level of commitment by the international community to move the sustainable development agenda forward, through the achievement of the internationally **agreed development goals** including the Millennium Development Goals (para 18)



Para.38 of the Rio+20 report



“We recognize the need for broader measures of progress to complement GDP in order to better inform policy decisions, and in this regard, we request the UN Statistical Commission in consultation with relevant UN System entities and other relevant organizations to launch a programme of work in this area building on existing initiatives.”



Some Lessons learned from MDG Monitoring

- The link between environmental sustainability and the economy is weak
- Lack of unified theory or supporting integrated-statistical framework or international standard
- Developing countries do not have the statistical capacity to produce timely and relevant MDG indicators.
 - Often estimation by international organizations is required to impute missing data.



Post – 2015 Development Agenda

Vision and responsibility

1. End **extreme poverty** in all its form in the **context of sustainable development**
2. A **global, people-centred** and **planet-sensitive** agenda to address the universal challenges of the 21st century
 - Promoting sustainable development
 - Supporting job-creating growth
 - Protecting the environment
 - Providing peace, security, justice, freedom and equity at all level



Vision: The Future We Want

- Recognize the need for transformative change for **inclusive, people-centered, sustainable development**
- Build on the core values and principles outlined in the Millennium Declaration and UN Charter....
- ...centred on **three fundamental principles**:
 - ✓ respect for human rights
 - ✓ peace and security
 - ✓ environmental sustainability



Vision: A life of dignity for all



Mainstream sustainable development at all levels **integrating economic, social and environmental aspects** and recognizing their **interlinkages**, so as to achieve sustainable development across all dimensions





Progress

Several work streams:

1. **UN Task Team** (continue analytical work and support to the Open Working Group)
2. **UNDG consultations**: 70+ national consultations and 11 thematic consultations (peace and security, conflict and fragility, food security, environmental sustainability, water, energy, inequalities, population dynamics, health, education, ...)
3. **High-level Panel of Eminent Persons**: 3 co-chairs (Liberia, Indonesia, UK); 26 panelists; Special Advisor as ex-officio member)
4. **Special Advisor** to the SG on Post 2015
5. **Inter-government Open Working Group** on SDGs



Progress

- **SG Report adopted by the General Assembly**
 - *Accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals: options for sustained and inclusive growth and issues for advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 (September 2012)*
- **High-Level Panel**
 - *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development (May 2013)*
- **UN Development Group**
 - *The global conversation begins (March 2013)*
- **Sustainable Development Solution Network**
 - *An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development (June 2013)*
- **SG Report on MDGs and post 2015 agenda , General Assembly**
 - *A life of dignity for all: accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 (September 2013)*



Implications for statistical community

- A need to bring statistical decisions into the political process of defining development goals, targets and indicators
- An early and adequate engagement of the statistical community is vital
- A leadership role for the national statistical offices in the national statistical system and engage with the national stakeholders
- A need to strengthen the capacity of national statistical systems to compile and report development indicators through balanced and resourced national statistical systems based on national priorities



- Fundamental rethink and transformational change in mainstreaming sustainable development
 - How we **set the statistical agenda**, how we **keep the agenda under review** and how we **promote the statistical agenda and the authority of official statistics**
 - How we engage within and between the national, regional and international statistical system with a **bottom-up approach based on national priorities**
 - How we **integrate policy and statistics** in our operations





Statisticians, politicians and policymakers, business sector, scientific/academic community, civil society, media and general public must join hands in data revolution



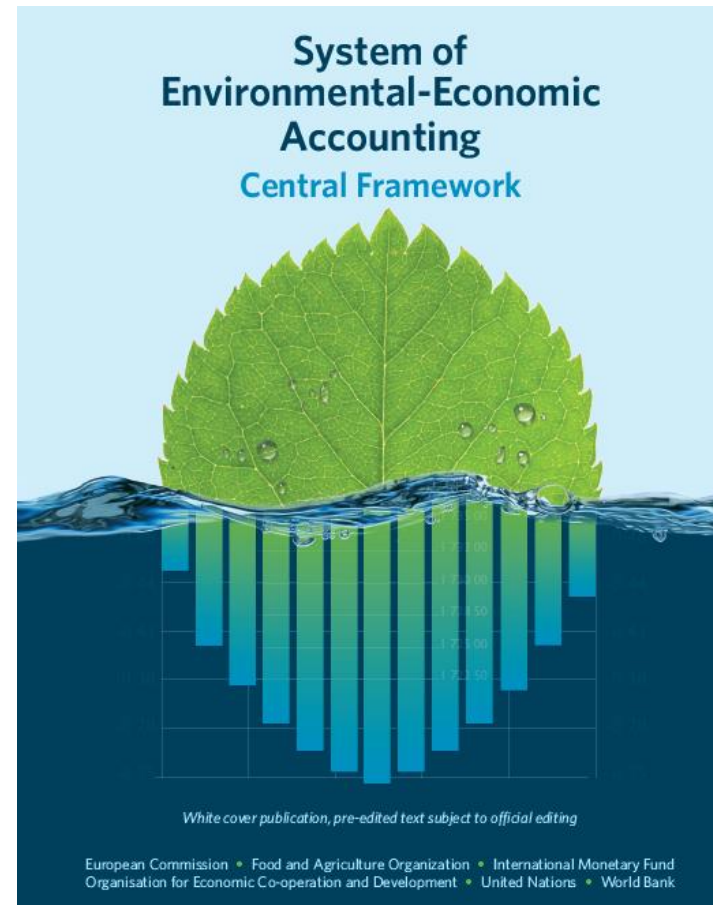


THE SEEA



Recent advances - SEEA

- Internationally agreed statistical framework to measure environment and its interactions with economy
- SEEA Central Framework adopted as international statistical standard by UN Statistical Commission in 2012
- Developed through inter-governmental process
- Published by UN, EU, FAO, IMF, OECD, WB





The Suite of SEEAs

- 1993** Handbook – interim publication
- 2003** Updated SEEA handbook – manual of best practices
- 2006** UNSC decided to elevate SEEA to an international standard

- 2012** **SEEA – The Central Framework (international standard)**
- 2013** **SEEA – Experimental Ecosystem Accounting**
- 2013** **SEEA – Applications and Extensions**

Subsystems:

- SEEA – Water (adopted in 2007)
- SEEA – Energy
- SEEA – Agriculture



SEEA: A Statistical Standard

- Countries are “encouraged to implement the standard”
- International organizations have obligations to assist countries in implementation
- Implementation strategy adopted by Statistical Commission in March 2013
- Data reporting mechanism will be established



Information is vital ...and it needs to be integrated

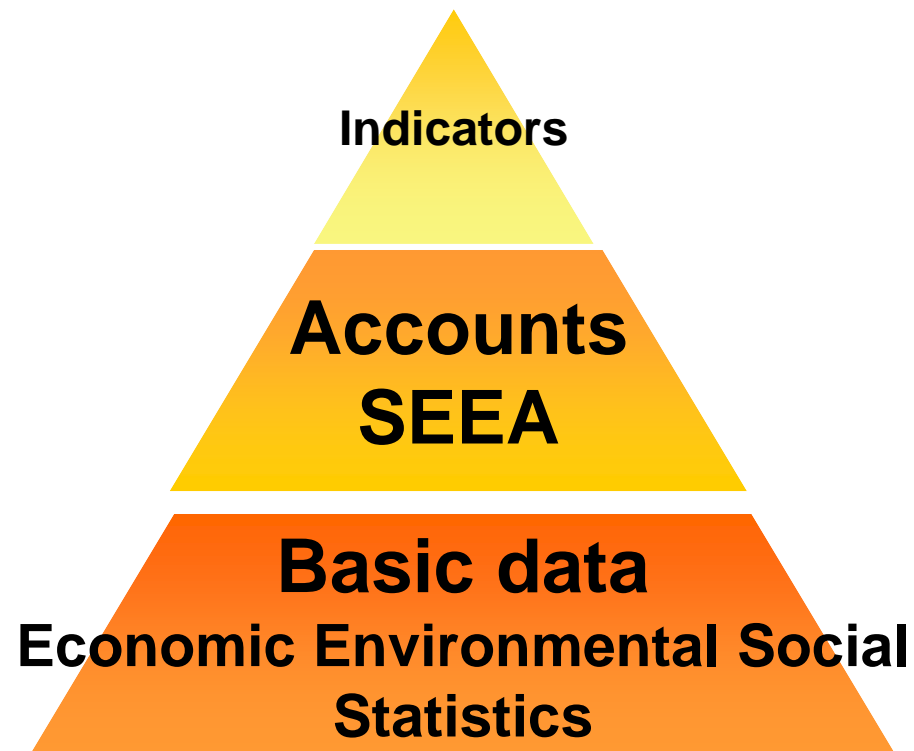
- The economy impacts on the environment and the environment impacts on the economy
- To understand these linkages we need to integrate environmental and economic information
- This is the explicit purpose of the SEEA





Integrated statistics

- Linking policy needs and statistics
- Understanding the institutional arrangements
- Integrated statistical production process/chain and services
- Consistency between basic data, accounts and tables and indicators





Linking environmental and socio-economic data is essential for policymakers

- Enables analysis of the impact of economic policies on the environment and vice versa
- Provides a quantitative basis for policy design
- Identifies the socio-economic drivers, pressures, impacts and responses affecting the environment
- Supports greater precision for environmental regulations and resource management strategies
- Provides indicators that express the relationships between the environment and the economy
- Support relevant perspectives on the dimensions of economic development, environmental sustainability and social equity



Problem: Information silos

- Data developed to answer one particular question or problem
- Difficult to figure out if all information is included
- Not always easy to see the whole picture, or how it relates to other things





Solution: Integrated information

- Holistic picture
- Consistency of information and identification of data gaps
- Interconnections between economy, environment and society



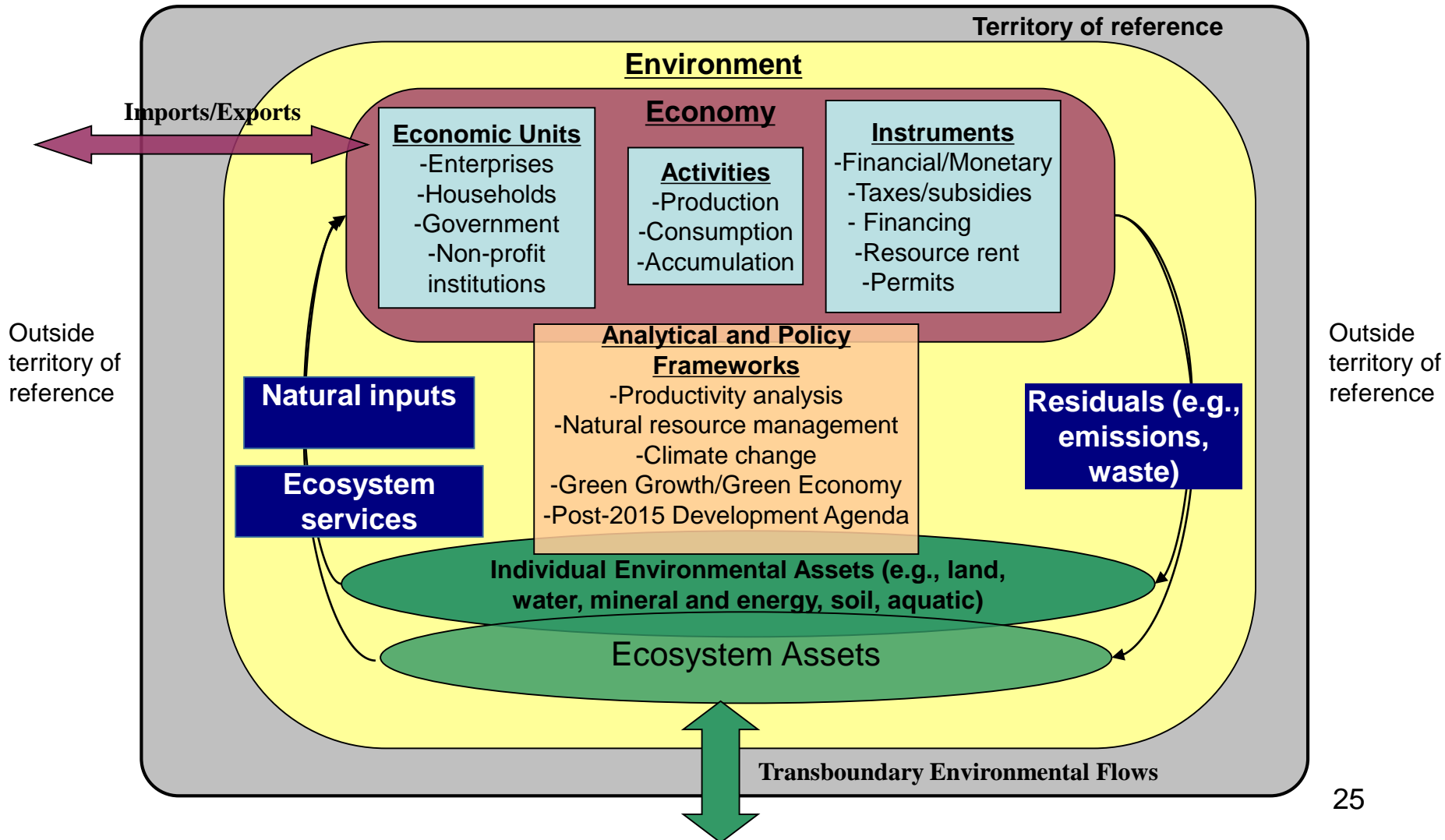


The SEEA Central Framework Accounts

- 1. Flow accounts:** supply and use tables for products, natural inputs and residuals (e.g. waste, wastewater) generated by economic activities.
 - physical (e.g. m² of water) and/or monetary values (e.g. permits to access water, cost of wastewater treatment, etc.)
- 2. Stock accounts** for environmental assets: natural resources and land
 - physical (e.g. fish stocks and changes in stocks) and/or monetary values (e.g. value of natural capital, depletion)
- 3. Activity / purpose accounts** that explicitly identify environmental transactions already existing in the SNA.
 - e.g. Environmental Protection Expenditure (EPE) accounts, environmental taxes and subsidies
- 4. Combined physical and monetary accounts** that bring together physical and monetary information for derivation indicators, including depletion adjusted aggregates



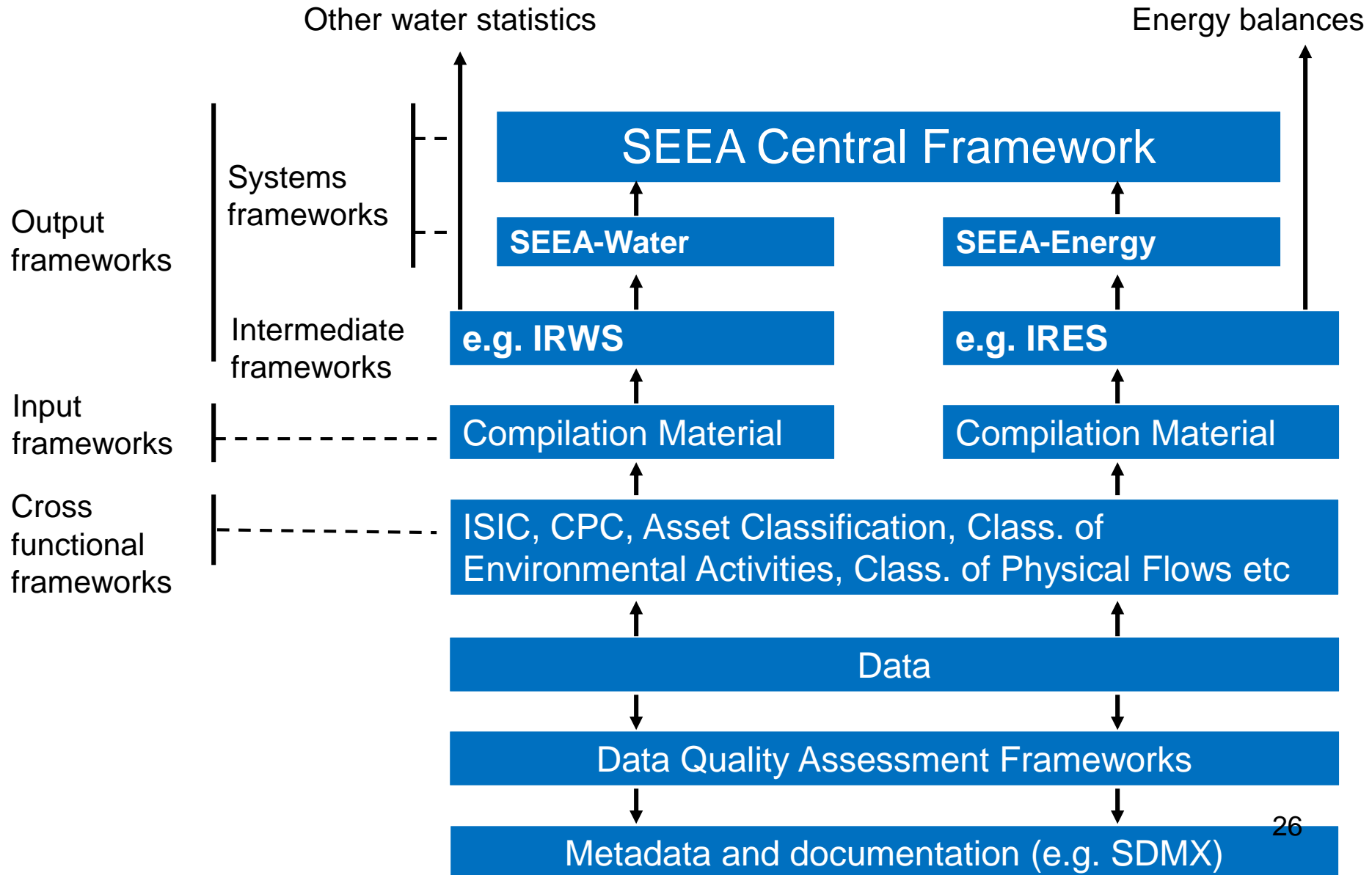
SEEA Conceptual Framework





System of Environmental-Economic Accounting

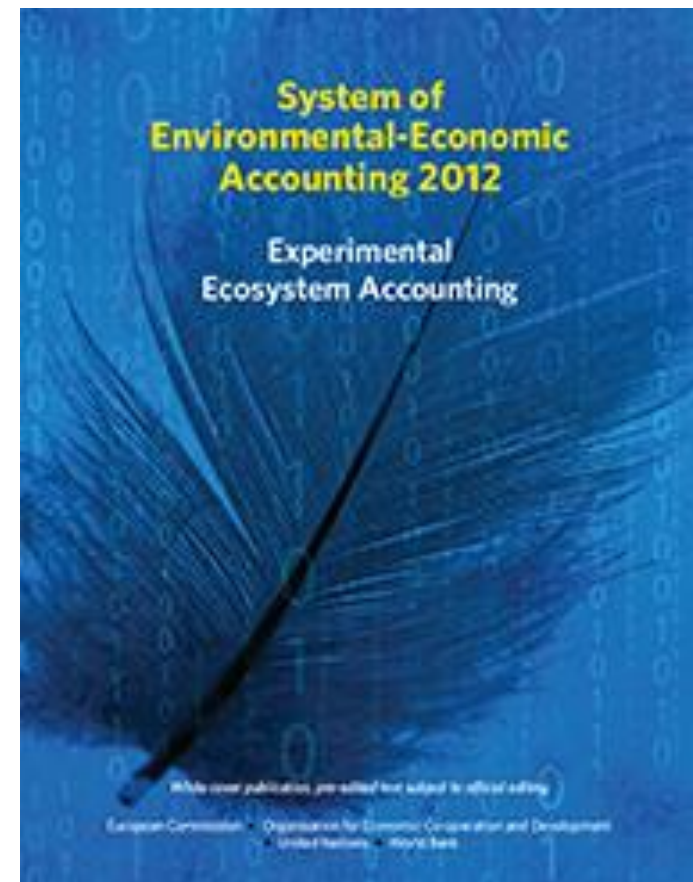
United Nations Statistics Division





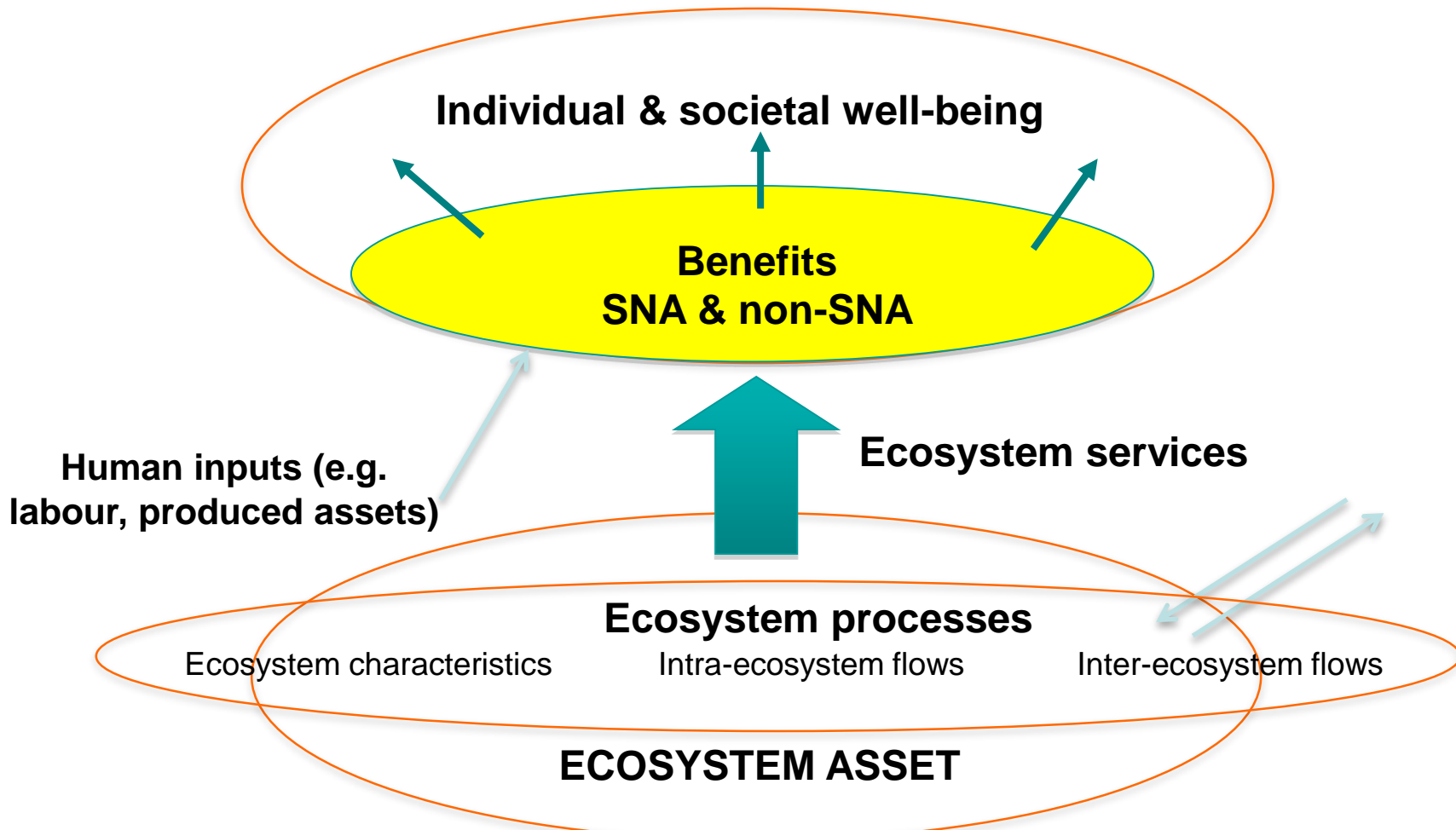
SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting

- Complements SEEA Central Framework
- Integrated statistical framework for accounting for ecosystem assets and associated ecosystem services
- Important first step in development of statistical framework for ecosystem accounting





Linking ecosystem assets and well-being through ecosystem services





SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting

- UN Statistical Commission
 - Encouraged countries to test the framework
 - Requested the creation of a mechanism to advance the research agenda
 - 4 research streams:
 - Ecosystem conditions and services
 - Geospatial
 - Valuation
 - Policy applications



SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting – next steps

- Projects in pipeline
 - Bottom-up approach – testing various models for measuring ecosystem condition and ecosystem services in few countries
 - Top-down approach – develop a baseline for ecosystem condition for many countries using a common model with inputs of country data for Post-2015 Development Agenda



Implications for Statistics in CARICOM



Engaged in the Post-2015 Discussion

- Important to get engaged in the Post-2015 discussion in particular ensuring the measurability of the indicators proposed and ensuring that the indicators are developed according to the international standards agreed by the UNSC
- A **leadership role** for the national statistical offices **in the national statistical system** to engage with the national stakeholders



Bottom-up approach

- Put forward the bottom-up approach that gives opportunities for countries and the region to set their own priorities and programme of work.
- Mobilization of political support and adequate resources at the highest level of national government
- A mutually supportive approach to capacity building that envisages a strong coordination and management role by national and sub-regional stakeholders and partners



Statistical Capacity Building

- Scale up the global programme of statistical implementation of the internationally-agreed normative document (e.g. SNA and SEEA)
- Systemic assessment of data gaps and identification of interrelated work streams based on policy demand and priorities
- Staged and progressive implementation of essential statistics that allows countries to flexibly meet their policy priorities



Integrated approach to statistics

- Move away from ad-hoc development of indicators but move towards the development of integrated information at the country level
- SNA and SEEA represent a systematic information organization framework that is needed to monitor sustainable development.
- Important for the region to develop a regional and national strategy for the implementation of the SNA and SEEA and at the country level



Implementation of SEEA

- Implementation strategy adopted by the UN Statistical Commission
 - Long-term strategy
 - Flexible and incremental based on national circumstances
 - Four phases
 - Establish national institutional mechanism
 - Self assessment of national policy priorities and data availability
 - Agree on priority and pilot compilation with existing data
 - Preparation of strategy development plan
 - Creation of partnerships at global, regional/sub-regional and national level



Some reference material

Briefing notes:

Briefing note on SEEA Central Framework:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/Brochure.pdf>

Briefing note on SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/workshops/int_seminar/note.pdf

Briefing note on SEEA Water and International Recommendations for Water Statistics (IRWS)

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/WWAP_UNSD_WaterMF.pdf

Methodological publications:

SEEA Central Framework:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/White_cover.pdf

SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc13/BG-SEEA-Ecosystem.pdf>

SEEA Applications and Extensions:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc13/BG-SEEA-AE.pdf>

Library – searchable library of publications (e.g. country case studies, methodological publications, etc.)

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/ceea/archive/>

Research agenda accompanying SEEA-Experimental Ecosystem Accounting

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc13/BG-SEEA-ResearchAgenda.pdf>

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