

System of
Environmental
Economic
Accounting

Overview of the SEEA and its Policy Applications

Alessandra Alfieri

Chief, Environmental-Economic Accounts Section
United Nations Statistics Division



United Nations

The Need for Natural Capital Accounting

- Nature and the services it provides support almost every aspect of human well-being
- But headline indicators like GDP, the unemployment rate and inflation do not capture the full economic contributions of nature
- Traditional accounts don't help us understand how the depletion of natural resources and degradation of the environment affect the economy and wellbeing



Adoption of the SEEA Ecosystem Accounting – March 21

Ecosystem Accounting in the News

— “ —

No longer will we allow mindless
environmental destruction to be
considered as economic progress

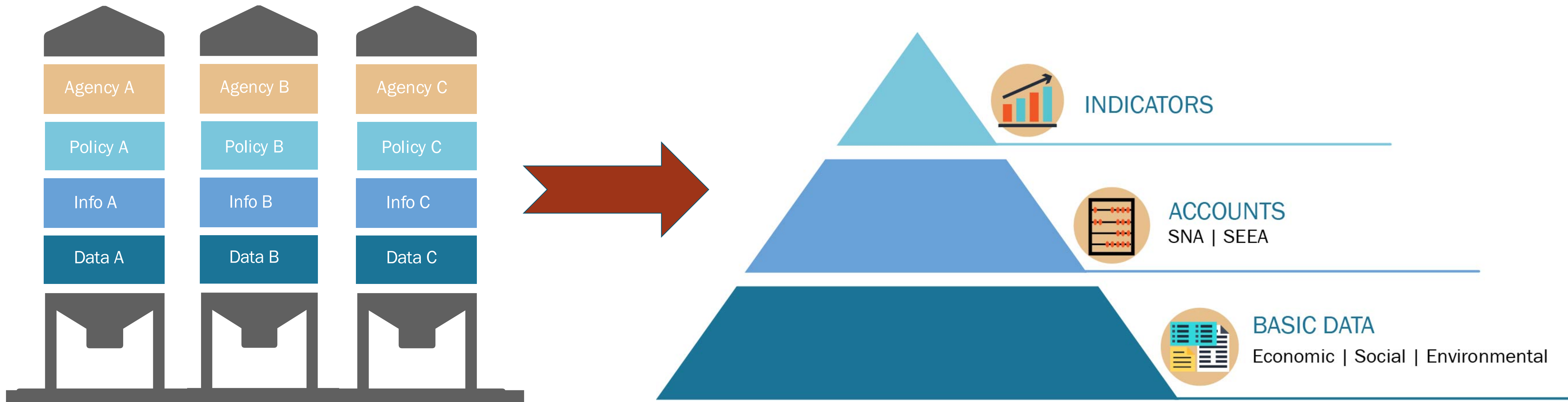
*António Guterres, Secretary-General of the
United Nations*

The SEEA as a Unifying Framework

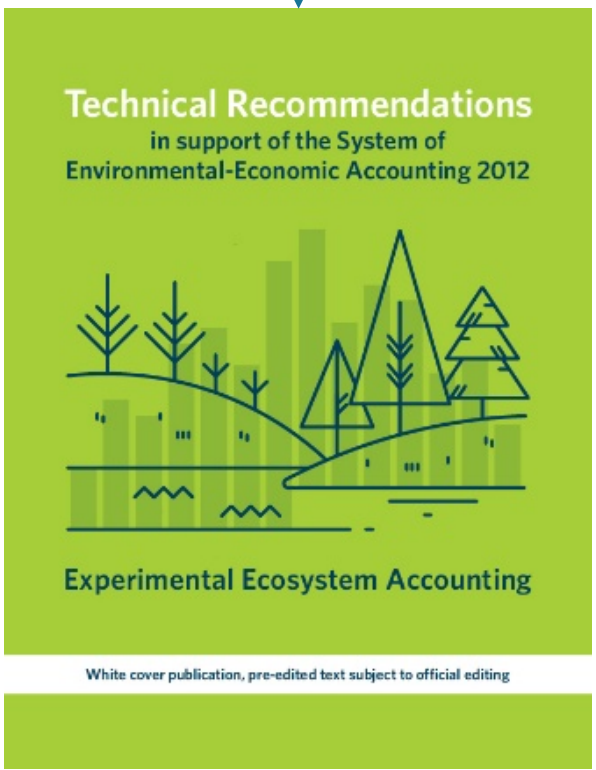
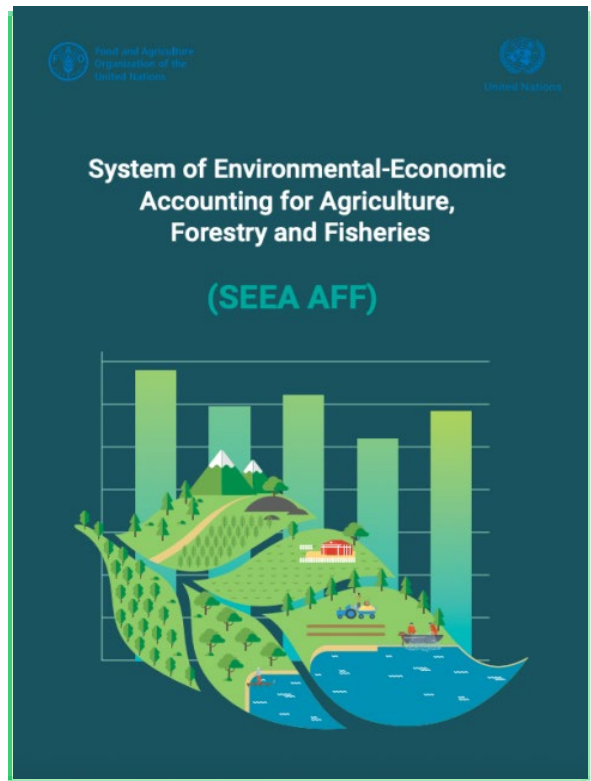
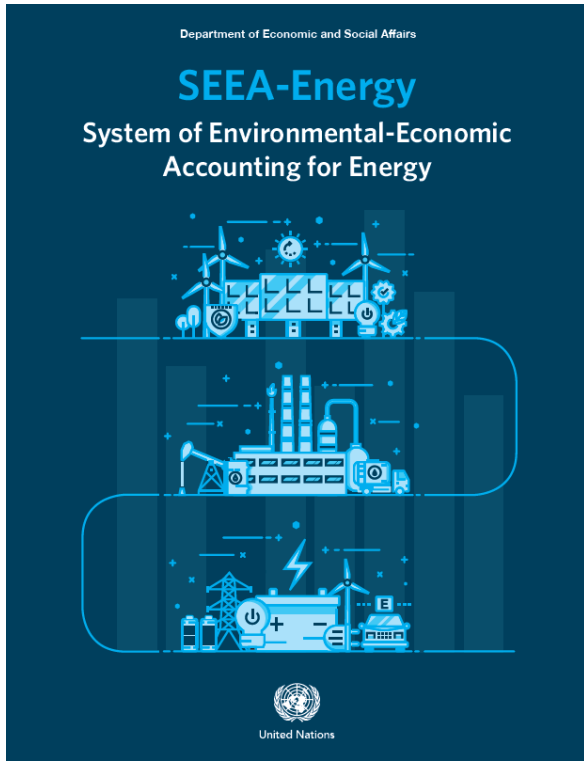
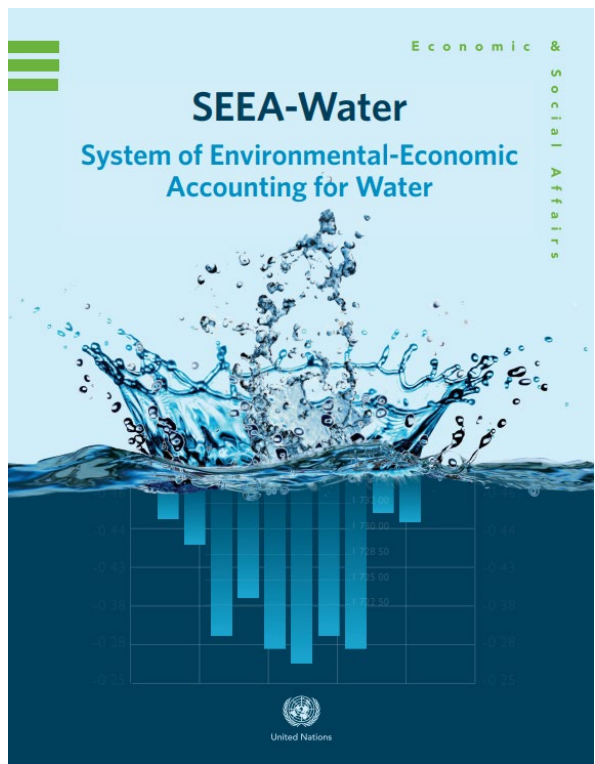
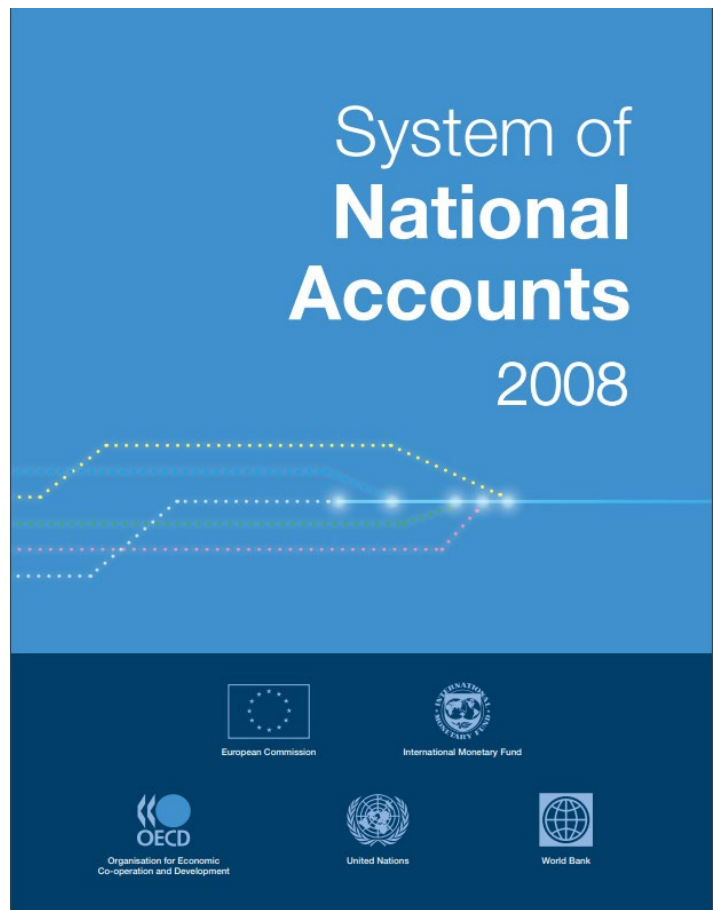
- SEEA accounts integrate numerous data sources, combining economic information with environmental information on areas such as
 - Energy
 - Air emissions
 - Agriculture and forestry
 - Ecosystems and many more
- These data sources are combined to produce an integrated set of accounts and develop policy relevant indicators



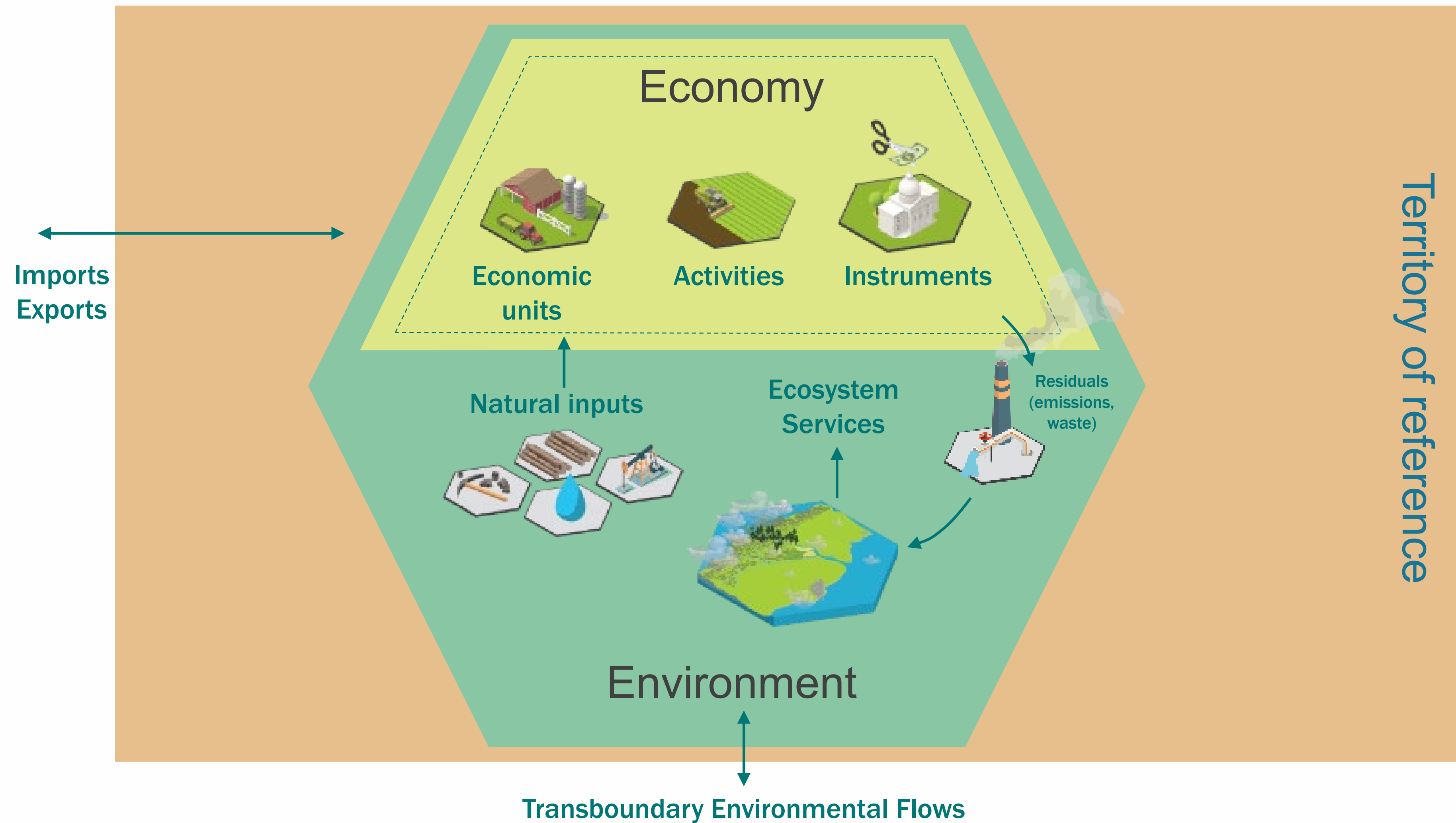
From data silos to integrated information



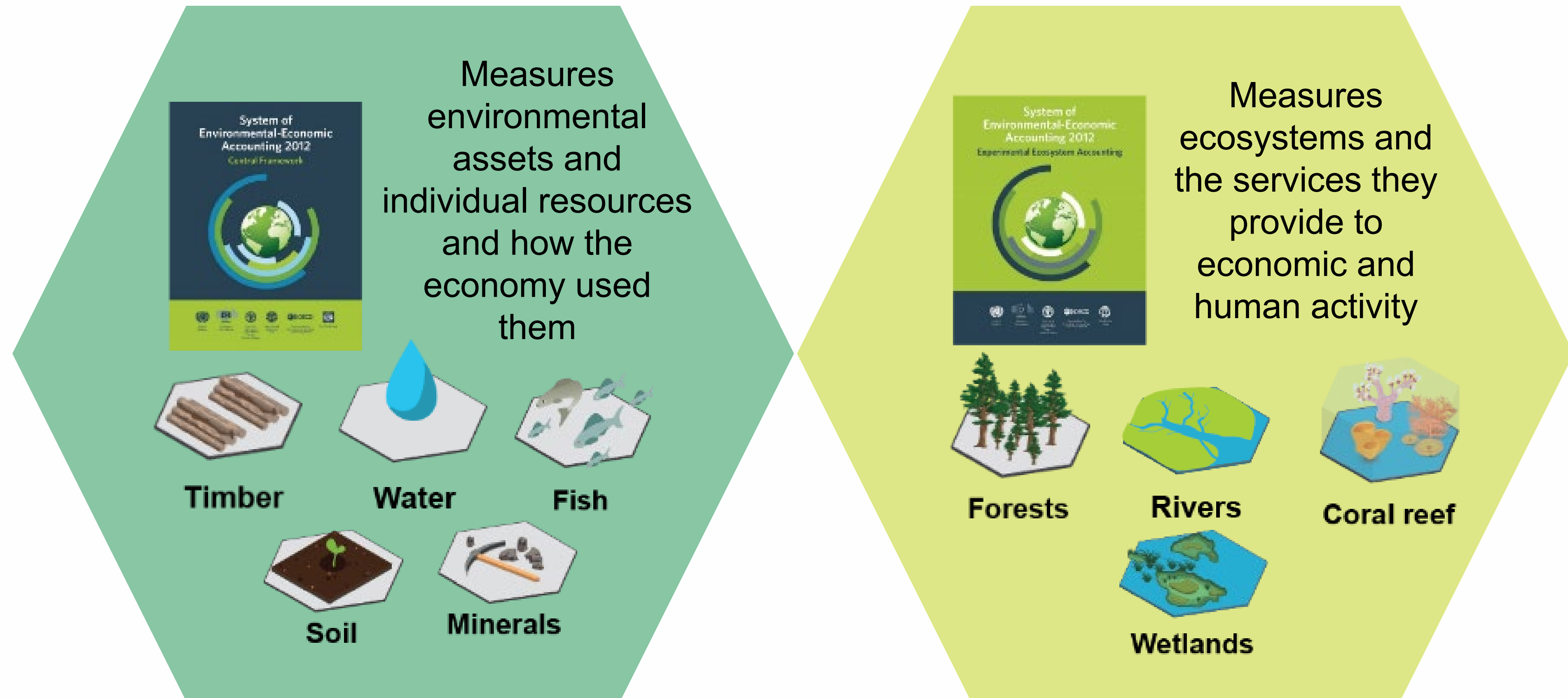
SNA and SEEA – statistical standards



SEEA Central Framework - Conceptual Framework



Two sides of the SEEA



Asset & Resources + Ecosystems = SEEA

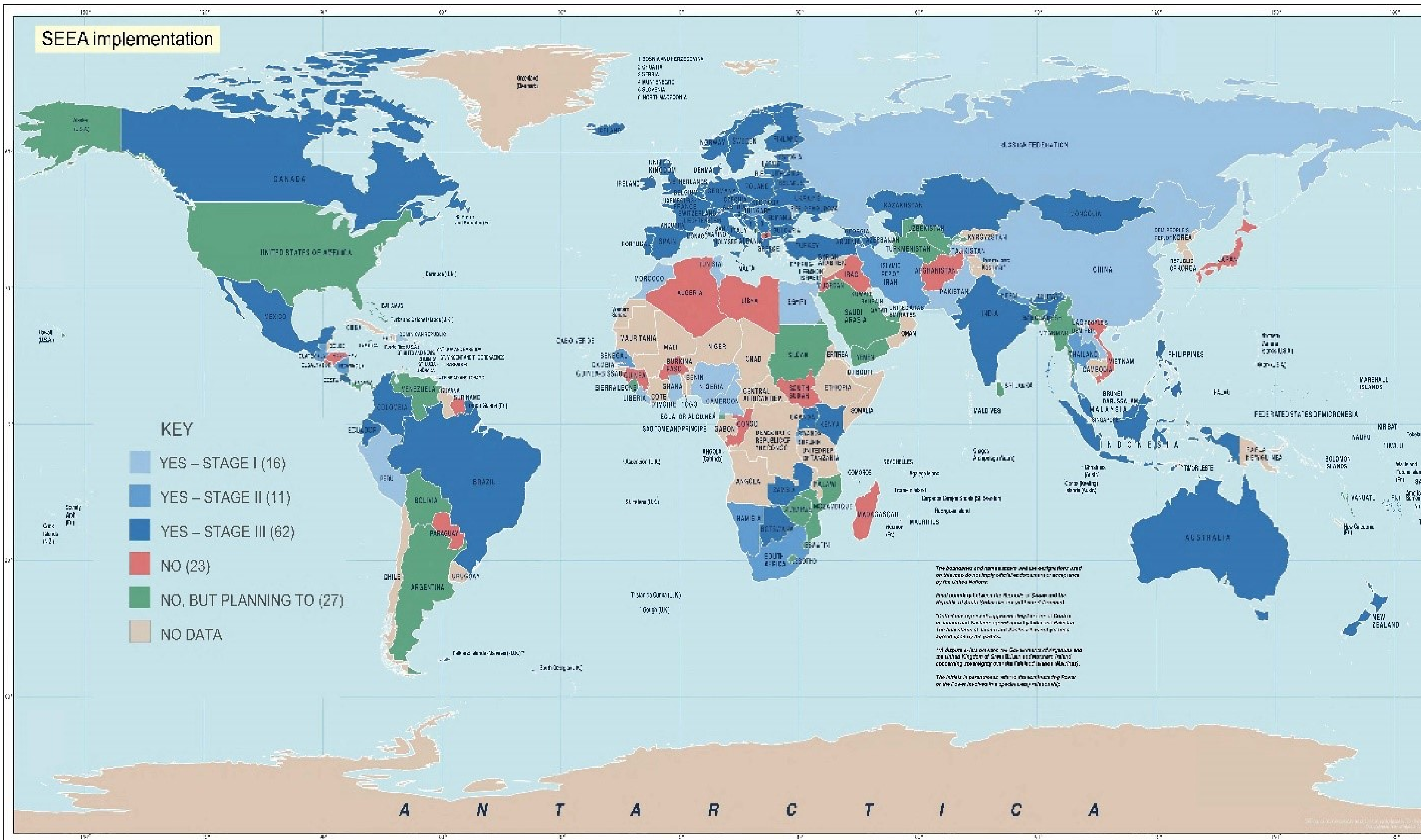
What can the SEEA do?

- Go beyond-GDP
 - SEEA can help inform a dashboard approach
 - SEEA can also inform complementary indicators such as depletion adjusted aggregates and gross ecosystem product (GEP)
- Deal with complex policy decisions
 - Policies need to account for interconnected domains, multiple stakeholders and various spatial scales
 - SEEA allows users to model outcomes and identify trade-offs and synergies at multiple scales
- Help inform policy from multiple angles
 - SEEA can inform all aspects of the policy cycle including policy definition, implementation and assessment and monitoring

The SEEA supports multiple ongoing initiatives



Status of SEEA implementation



- > 2020 Global Assessment for Environmental-Economic Accounting and Supporting Statistics
- > 89 countries implementing the SEEA Central Framework
- > 34 countries compiling SEEA Ecosystem Accounts
- > 27 countries planning to start implementation of the SEEA

The SEEA supports the SDGs

The SEEA provides information for 40 indicators for 9 SDGs

GOAL 2: Zero Hunger

GOAL 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

GOAL 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

GOAL 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

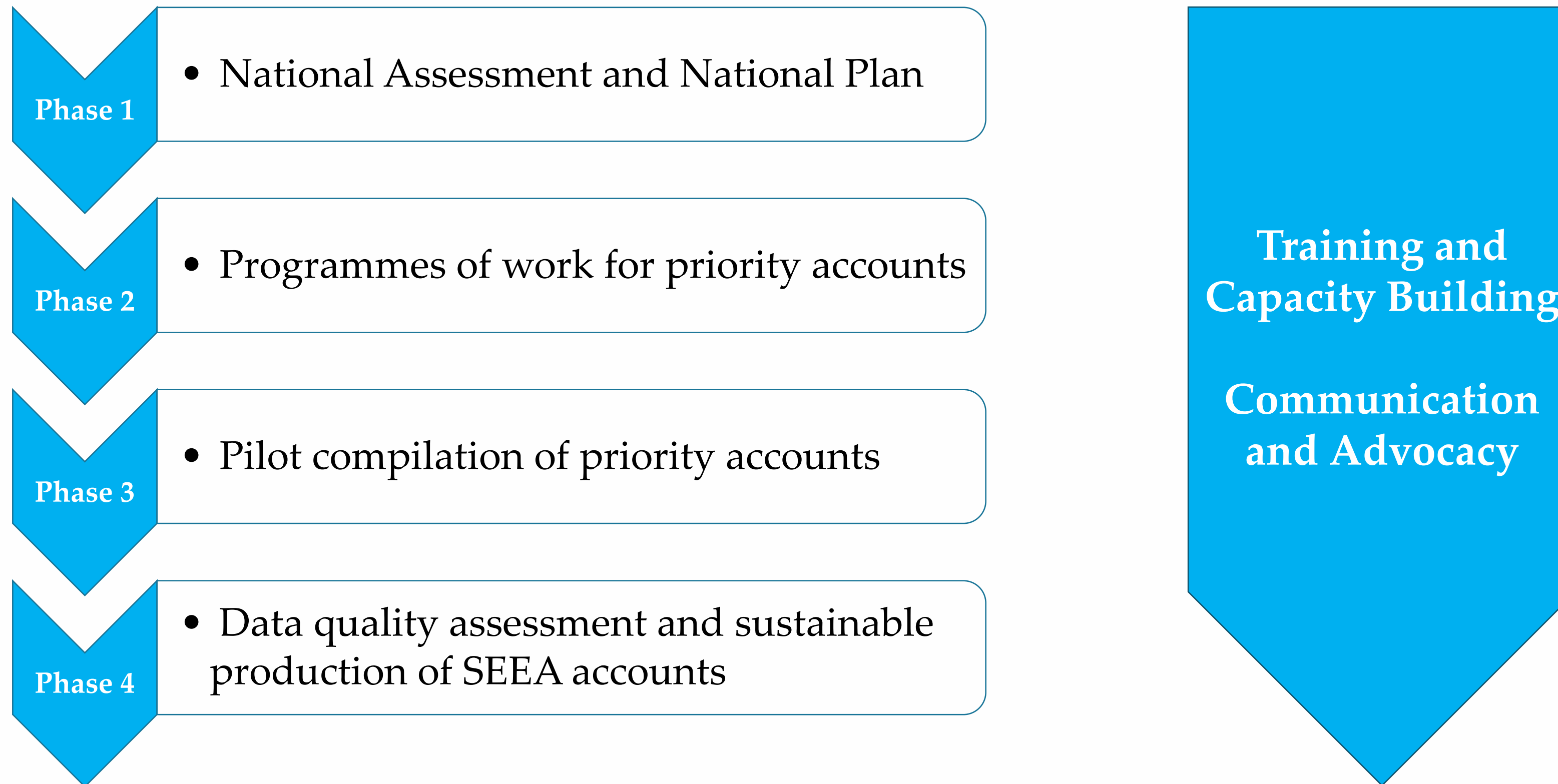
GOAL 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

GOAL 14: Life Below Water

GOAL 15: Life on Land

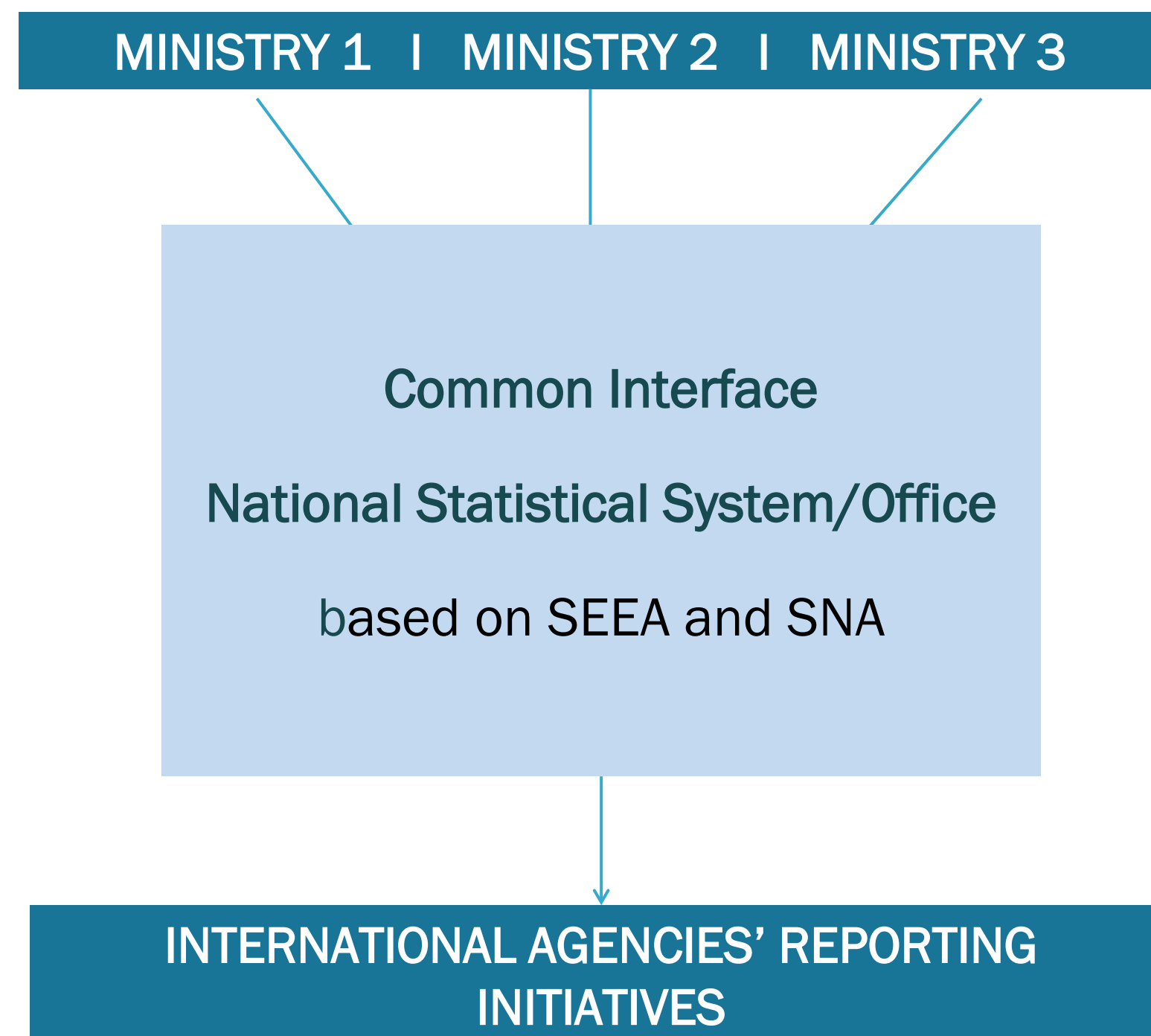


Approach to National Implementation



Streamlined reporting

Methodological Consistency resulting from implementation of the SEEA reduces reporting burden of national ministries/agencies:



- Single data system to inform indicators
- Data compiled once for many purposes
- Reduced need for countries to make arduous data adjustments for international reporting

Facilitates streamlined reporting process for reporting initiatives

- Consistent definitions, classifications and spatial units at national and international level allows for direct transmission of information



THANK YOU

seea@un.org