

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE UNCEEA Working Group on Coordination and Communication (Area A)

Introduction

At its 12th meeting in June 2017, the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental Economic Accounting (UNCEEA) agreed to the establishment of a working group on coordination, led by Statistics Canada (Area A) and comprised of several UNCEEA members, in particular the leads of Area D on Capacity Building and Area E on Communication, to ensure synergies in the work programmes of the various groups.

At the 15th meeting in July 2020, the UNCEEA agreed on the merger of Area A (Coordination) and Area E (Statistical Response on Emerging Policy Issues) given the interlinkages and potential synergies between coordination and communication.

This document outlines the Programme of Work for Area A and guides its activities for 2022 to 2025.

Mandate

The new Area A's mandate, which combined the mandates of the old Area A and Area E, is to foster collaboration, integration and complementarity of programmes relevant to environmental economic accounting as well as design and implement practical strategies to promote the System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA) for emerging policy issues.

Given the mandate of Area A, the programme of work builds on the efforts of other areas, principally to identify entry points to promote the use of the SEEA as an underlying statistical framework for monitoring and reporting, as appropriate. Area A engages on behalf of the UNCEEA in various groups to promote the mainstreaming of the SEEA in various initiatives. Engagement at the technical level is undertaken by the different UNCEEA technical working groups depending on priorities.

Area A's mandate has important links to other UNCEEA working groups. In the case of new topics (e.g., circular economy) which can be informed by the SEEA, Area A's role is to initiate a programme of work and coordinate activities within the UNCEEA. This programme of work can include activities of the other working groups of the Committee, including technical development of the SEEA, global databases, or capacity building.

Statistics Canada chairs the working group meetings and leads its activities.

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Objective of the working group

The objective of the working group is to:

- a) Identify entry points to mainstream the SEEA into policy and statistical initiatives;
- b) Members act as champions and provide leadership in advancing the SEEA in the various initiatives;
- c) Develop a programme of work and support its advancement;
- d) Promote collaboration with the technical working groups of the UNCEEA and support the interaction of experts with Area A where appropriate. .

Meeting frequency and logistics

The working group will be ongoing, with meetings taking place bi-monthly via video conferencing, with side-meetings as necessary with Area A sub-working groups and with other stakeholders.

Membership

Members of the group include representatives from the following countries and organizations: Statistics Canada (Chair), Australian Bureau of Statistics, INEGI-Mexico, Statistics Netherlands, Bureau of Economic Analysis-USA, Statistics Sweden, Destatis Germany, UK Office of National Statistics, India Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Eurostat, UNECE, OECD and UNSD. Representatives of different initiatives will be invited to join the group to ensure coordination with the UNCEEA.

A list of those organizations' representatives and their coordinates (as of February 2022) has been provided in Appendix A.

Terms of Reference of the working group

The agreed terms of reference are attached in Appendix B.

Work plan for 2022-2025

Key activities

As per the working group's terms of reference, its long-term mandate includes the mainstreaming the SEEA in key policy initiatives. In particular, the goal of Area A is to play a coordination and mainstreaming role and establish or expand the level of input on emerging issues that could benefit from the SEEA. Area A will focus on various initiatives where greater collaboration would be beneficial related to the potential role of SEEA in the development and compilation of statistics. In particular, Area A will solicit wider reviews of documents coming from specific initiatives and in promoting

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collaboration and reducing duplication of the work of various subgroups of the UNCEEA involved in these areas (climate change, circular economy, etc.).

For 2022 to 2025, the working group will focus on the following priorities:

Landscape assessment and development of a strategy to facilitate linkages

Objective

- Review the landscape of international committees, working groups and task forces currently working in the area of environment statistics and evaluate where linkages between the efforts exist, as well as the participation of SEEA-related experts where it makes sense.
- Promote coordination with SEEA-relevant groups and reduce duplication.

Activities

- Develop a landscape assessment that describes the various international committees, working groups or task forces on environmental economic accounting and supporting statistics.
- Report on linkages between the groups, where they exist or do not exist.
- Report on the participation of experts on SEEA on these groups and identify where SEEA representation or linkages do not currently exist and recommend where they could be established.
- Maintain the assessment over time.

Sustainable finance

Objective

- Come to a better understanding of the data needs of players in the sustainable finance space and what the statistical community can provide.
- Facilitate collaboration and communication amongst the various international groups involved in this topic.

Activities

- By means of the landscape assessment, Area A will work to establish a better understanding of who the current international players are in this space, and what initiatives exist where NSOs and international organizations can contribute in promoting the SEEA.
- Area A will assess how best to contribute to informing the user community of the potential contribution of the SEEA.
- Develop a plan of action for Area A based on the knowledge gained by the landscape assessment.

Biodiversity and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

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Objective

- Ensure that the SEEA is properly reflected in the monitoring framework of the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework currently being developed.
- Support the use of common standards related to data, methods and data sources for monitoring.

Activities

- Continue to follow the progress and ensure that the statistical community is represented in the future ad-hoc technical expert group on indicators.
- Continue to promote collaboration between national statistical offices and CBD focal points and ministries of environment for monitoring the post-2020 global biodiversity framework at the national level.
- Organize webinars and other meetings to bring together the statistical and the biodiversity communities

Circular economy

Objective

- Engage with the UNECE and OECD initiatives on developing a statistical framework for the circular economy and ensure that these outputs have global reach and use the SEEA accounts as the starting point for defining the statistical framework.

Activities

- Engage with the UNECE Expert Group on Circular Economy, OECD Circular Economy Working Group and the Technical Committee on the SEEA Central Framework to facilitate collaboration.
- Continue to have Area A/UNCEEA representation on the Expert Group.
- Organize discussion sessions with both data users and data providers
 - Support a World Circular Economy Forum side event bringing statistical and policy organisations together.

Climate change

Objective

- Facilitate connections between the various efforts to produce climate change indicators and statistics and promote collaboration and the use of the SEEA within the statistical community and beyond.

Activities

- Monitor the work on the G20 Data Gaps Initiative and ensure collaboration between the relevant UNCEEA subgroups (Areas B1, C and D).
- Monitor the work of the UN Network of Economic Statisticians related to environmental issues such as climate change and sustainable finance.
- Engage with international groups such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Intergovernmental Panel on

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Climate Change (IPCC) and the Expert Group of Environmental Statistics to facilitate collaboration.

Nature Based Solution/UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration

Objective

- Engage with the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration to ensure that the SEEA is properly reflected in the development of the monitoring framework and its implementation.

Activities

- Prepare material that should how the SEEA can inform nature based solutions.
- Engage with the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration led by UNEP and FAO.

Communication

Objective

- Engage in communication efforts to keep stakeholders and the general public informed, up-to-date and engaged on the SEEA.

Activities

- Produce the quarterly newsletter, the SEEA News & Notes and expand readership.
- Maintain and expand the website.
- Engage in communication efforts (social media, news stories, communication pieces) related to the above priorities of biodiversity, climate change, circular economy and sustainable finance.

Future work

Future work may also cover topics such as ocean accounting and measuring the sustainability of tourism. As the programme of work is a living document, it will be updated annually.

Appendix A: list of participants and coordinates

| Name | Country |
|---|-------------|
| Greg Peterson (Chair and official STC rep) | Canada |
| Carolyn Cahill | Canada |
| Jeff Fritzsche | Canada |
| Mariam Iqbal | Canada |
| Alessandra Alfieri | UNSD |
| Jessica Ying Chan | UNSD |
| Dennis Fixler | USA |
| Amanda Clark | Australia |
| Nils Brown | Sweden |
| Jillian Campbell | CBD |
| Paulo Lourenco Dias Nunes | FAO |
| P. Bhanumati | IMF |
| Michael Nagy | UNECE |
| Malgorzata (Gosia) Cwiek | UNECE |
| Gerhard Eding | Netherlands |
| Sjoerd Schenau | Netherlands |
| Anthony Dvarkas | UNESCAP |
| Raffaello Cervigni | World Bank |
| Sven Kaumanns | Germany |
| Arturo de la Fuente | Eurostat |
| Anton Steurer | Eurostat |
| Liz McKeown | UK |
| Ian Townsend | UK |
| Myriam Linster | OECD |
| Daniel Clarke | OECD |
| Rodolfo Astolfi | OECD |
| Eduardo de la Torre | Mexico |
| Graciela Marquez | Mexico |

Appendix B: Terms of reference of the UNCEEA working group on Coordination and Communication (Area A)

Mandate

To foster collaboration, integration and complementarity of programmes relevant to environmental-economic accounting and to increase the implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting and mainstream its use in integrated policy making.

Objectives

Eurostat, OECD, World Bank and UNSD are the main international organizations working in the domain of environmental-economic accounting. In addition, several National Statistical Offices (NSO) are also involved in capacity-building either on their own or in partnerships with the international organizations or other NSOs. Furthermore, an increasing number of international agencies are developing concepts and statistical methods for emerging data and reporting initiatives in the area of environmental statistics. For these reasons, coordination is required to avoid response and other burdens on NSOs from competing demands on their resources, to help achieve aligned statistical methods, and to ensure that activities of the international organizations are complementary and resource-effective.

Specifically, there are several key areas of work included in the mandate of this group:

- Expanding use of SEEA in the development and reporting of indicators, on analysis, on decision-making
- Leveraging the use of training tools that have already produced in order to make them more readily accessible, and where necessary, to produce common tools to be used and disseminated widely
- Design and implement practical strategies to promote the SEEA for emerging policy issues.

Areas of focus and deliverables

Collaboration and mainstreaming the SEEA on emerging issues

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The Working Group will work to ensure that SEEA guidelines are used as much as possible in the development of new international reporting initiatives, including initiatives such as the UNECE indicators on climate change, sustainable finance and the SDG indicators. Area A will also coordinate with UN regional commissions on existing reporting initiatives (i.e., climate change indicators, waste indicators) to ensure appropriate reference to SEEA.

Timeline

The work group will be ongoing. A detailed work plan with timelines and deliverables will be drafted on an annual basis.

Meetings

Statistics Canada will act as chair to the working group. Meetings will be bi-monthly, and will take place by telephone and/or interactive video conferencing, with possible side-meetings during the yearly plenary of the UNCEEA.