



United Nations Environment
Programme



Statistics Division
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations

Global Economy Wide Material Flow Accounting Manual

Global Consultation Cover Note

Background

The development of global compilation guidelines for economy wide material flow accounting has been carried out by UN Environment under the auspices of the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEE). The Global Economy Wide Material Flow Accounting Manual provides compilation guidelines to national statistical offices to build capacity for material flow accounting at the national level, to drive forward progress of global material flow accounting databases and to report progress towards SDG targets 8.4, 12.2 and 12.5.1.

The manual was prepared by an international consortium led by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in collaboration with the Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria, the Institute of Social Ecology in Vienna, Austria and the University of Nagoya, Japan, with UNEP providing the Secretariat.

The manual covers methods for assembling economy wide material flow accounts at the national level and for designing relevant accounts. The conceptual framework used in the manual is that presented in the System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA) Central Framework. It provides guidance on how to compile and collect data to populate the accounts and tables already included in the SEEA Central Framework.

The approach to developing the manual has been to build off the economy wide material flow accounting guidelines of Eurostat and the OECD and employ principles which facilitate their integration into the SEEA framework. However, as a global manual, the document was designed to be fit for purpose for developing countries. Thus, in some cases the compilation guidelines presented diverge from the methods used by Eurostat and the OECD in order to reflect the economic conditions present, particularly those in lower income countries and those where the economy has a large component coming from the extraction of primary resources.

A preliminary draft of the manual was discussed internally within UN Environment and circulated to relevant expert groups, including those from Eurostat and OECD, as well as the UNCEEA. Based on the feedback from these experts, the draft has been updated and is now being circulated for global consultation.

The purpose of the global consultation is to obtain your views on the scope, coverage and content of the manual. Considering the multidisciplinary scope of economy wide material flow accounting, we encourage your organization to consult with the relevant experts from different disciplines, in particular the ministries of environment.

Following the global consultation, it is intended that the manual be presented as a background document at the next meeting of the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2019, together with a summary of the comments received. Comments received will be included in a final draft, which the United Nations Statistical Commission will asked to take note of. The manual is expected to be published jointly by UN Environment and UNSD.

Nature of the consultation

The consultation aims at obtaining feedback on the proposed nature and purpose of the compilation guidelines manual. Also, comments on the coverage, structure, style and tone of the document would be appreciated.

Beyond general comments, proposals for additional material and references, suggestions of alternative treatments and extensions, and questions concerning the proposed designs of the accounts are encouraged.

This global consultation is being conducted jointly by the UN Environment and the UN Statistics Division. It has been sent to the national statistical office of each country and countries are encouraged to consider means by which responses to the draft manual may be co-ordinated with experts from relevant ministries and stakeholders. Countries are requested to provide their comments in the attached comment form.

Deadline for responses: 1 March 2019