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**Training programme in support of implementation of the SEEA in
countries**

Draft paper prepared by UNSD

(for discussion)

1. Background

1. The System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) Central Framework was adopted as the international statistical standard on environmental-economic accounts by the United Nations Statistical Commission at its 43rd session in March 2012. This makes the SEEA the first statistical standard for measuring the environment and its relationship with the economy on par with the System of National Accounts (SNA) for measuring the economy. At the 44th session in March 2013, the Statistical Commission adopted the implementation strategy for the SEEA 2012 Central Framework. Additionally, the SEEA has been identified as a useful framework to inform integrated policies and therefore is getting increasing attention in the context of measurement and accountability of the post-2015 agenda as the monitoring of SDG indicators will need to be based on a solid information basis. These factors resulted in an increased demand for implementing the SEEA. Given the novelty of this area of work, there is a need to increase the number of trainers that can support the SEEA implementation in countries.
2. The International Conference on “Global Implementation programme for the SEEA” and the 8th meeting 20-21 June 2013 of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEAA) recognized the importance of Training of Trainers (TOT) to face increasing demand of assistance from countries to set up a strategy for the SEEA implementation, develop a programme of work and start piloting the compilation of selected accounts. This need was further reiterated by the United Nations Statistics Commission which requested that training materials and courses be developed in support of the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework (See 2014 Report of the UNSC, decision 45/105)

2. Developing the course and its content

3. The Statistics Division, in collaboration with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) has developed a programme for the training of trainers for the worldwide SEEA implementation. The main aims of the programme are twofold. First, it aims to increase the pool of SEEA experts who are in a better position to implement the accounts and train others, with particular emphasis on raising capacity in developing countries. Second, it aims to provide a standardized set of training materials that can be used by all those delivering training on the SEEA in order to ensure a consistent quality and messaging. The training is based on a blended learning format and is comprised of three phases: a mandatory online training, an in-person seminar, and a follow-up phase.
4. The mandatory online training consists of 5 modules which are to be completed over a period of 8 weeks. The modules were developed in close consultation with the SEEA CF Technical Committee and were reviewed by experts in national statistical offices and international agencies. The online course is tutored by an e-learning tutor and accompanied by SEEA-experts who lead 4 live online sessions to further explain concepts learned in the different modules. Participants also complete 4 homework assignments to check their understanding of accounting concepts. A particularly useful feature of the online training platform is the forum where participants can interact with each other and SEEA experts.
5. The second phase of the training programme consists of a 4-day in person seminar. During the seminar week participants further discuss the content of the online course and any open questions that came up in the online course. The seminar is led by 4 experts on SEEA from UNSD, GIZ and

national statistical offices of countries with SEEA experience. Major components of the seminar are group exercises which aim to further elaborate on some of the more challenging accounting concepts. Beside the technical knowledge, seminar participants also share experiences on how to best design and conduct trainings. Furthermore, during the seminar, participants develop an action plan to further equip themselves with a solid set of skills and plan their next SEEA training.

6. After the seminar week, participants are expected to share the knowledge with others in their countries/sub-regions to further raise capacity. Participants are expected to continue to network, report on their activities and share experiences in the delivering of the training via a suitable online tool (the new SEEA website will include a platform for such activities).

3. Implementing the course

7. The course was first run in the first half of 2015. Countries participating in the seminar included Brazil, China, Ecuador, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Kyrgyzstan Republic, Malaysia, Morocco, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Samoa, South Africa and Uganda. International organizations participating in the seminar included the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Bank. The training was facilitated by experts from GIZ, Statistics Canada, Statistics Netherlands and UNSD. Reviews of the online and in person phase by participants noted the usefulness of the course in increasing their knowledge on SEEA. Participants also noted the importance of fostering a global network of those working on the SEEA.
8. The first in person seminar also provided information on facilitation skills, including techniques to manage group dynamics and meet learning objectives. As a follow-up to the workshop, participants held or are planning to hold national seminars on SEEA, bringing together different stakeholders to raise awareness and forge national implementation plans, drafts of which were prepared during the training workshop.
9. Following up on the first run of the course, demand for rerunning the training has been high. In particular requests came in from regional organizations to hold the training course in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Given the audience for the regional training courses, it was decided that during the in person phase more time should be devoted to technical discussions as oppose to providing training on facilitation skills.
10. Participants in the regional trainings still completed person work plans and are expected to share their knowledge with others in their home countries. UNSD in collaboration with GIZ and relevant regional bodies (ECA in Africa and ECLAC in Latin America) have run the course two additional times. The training for English speaking African countries was completed in the first quarter of 2015 with a resource person from Statistics Denmark along with staff from UNSD and GIZ facilitating the training. The course for Latin American and Caribbean countries will be completed by July 2015; staff from Statistics Canada, UNSD and GIZ are expected to facilitate the in person phase. It should be noted that the online modules have been translated into Spanish to better serve the needs of the ECLAC region. In collaboration with UNSIAP and ESCAP, the course will run again in late 2015 for Asian countries.

4. Future plans

11. Given the success of this initial SEEA course, UNSD plans to expand the number of courses being offered. Taking into account the demand from countries, there are plans to develop in depth courses for energy, water and ecosystems. The decision to prioritize water and energy accounts stemmed from the fact that these accounts were identified as priorities in the Global Assessment on the SEEA completed in 2014. The training courses will build on existing materials, including the SEEA Water, the International Recommendations for Water Statistics and the SEEA Energy. The course on ecosystem accounting will be based on the training materials that have been developed as part of the Norwegian funded project “Advancing Natural Capital Accounting”. The course will be fully consistent with the Guidance document on ecosystem accounting which is currently being finalized. In addition to the above, to better sensitize the users of the accounts, in particular policy makers, a short introductory course on the SEEA is planned for this particular audience. Additional courses will also be developed on the basis of country needs.
12. With the development of the new SEEA website and in order to reach a broader audience, in the medium term UNSD plans to develop a new platform that would host the training courses. This will allow those interested in gaining more knowledge on the accounts to take courses in the various topics on an on-demand basis as opposed to the current set up where courses run for a set period of time with only selected participants.
13. The development of future courses, as it was the case for the other courses, will be done under the guidance of SEEA CF Technical Committee and in consultation with experts from national statistical offices and international organizations.

5. Issues for discussions

1. *Do you agree with the suggested way forward for expanding the training of trainers programme?*
2. *How can the UNCEEA support the training of trainers programme?*