

MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE UN COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL ACCOUNTING

2 October 2017, via WebEx

Meeting minutes

- **Present:** Bert Kroese (Chair), Lisa Wardlaw-Kelly (Australia Bureau of Statistics), Andre Loranger and Carolyn Cahill (Statistics Canada), Rolando Ocampo (INEGI, Mexico), Sjoerd Schenau (Statistics Netherlands), Gerhard Bouwer (Statistics South Africa), Anton Steurer (Eurostat), Peter van de Ven and Pierre-Alain Pionnier (OECD), Ivo Havinga, Alessandra Alfieri, Jessica Chan, Bram Edens, Marko Javorsek, Sokol Vako (United Nations Statistics Division)
- **Regrets:** Francesco Tubiello (FAO), Nancy Steinbach (Statistics Sweden), Glen-Marie Lange (World Bank)

AREA A – COORDINATION (led by Andre Loranger, Statistics Canada)

Statistics Canada introduced the recommendation to establish a Working Group on Coordination and the TOR of the group. The Group would make an assessment of current activities and ensure that duplication of work is avoided, promote the use of the SEEA and the use of indicators consistent with the SEEA, make training materials available to others, and link to work on SDGs. Proposed members for this group are: Australia, Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, Sweden, United States, FAO, and UNEP. These include countries that volunteered participation during the UNCEEA and the area leads of areas D and E that are closely related to the work of Area A. The Bureau also discussed the terms of reference of the UNECE Task forces.

Actions:

1. The Bureau agreed to establish the Working Group on Coordination and approved the TORs as presented.
2. Statistics Canada and Statistics Netherlands, as members of the UNECE task forces on climate change and waste, will ensure that the work of the task forces would make reference to SEEA and UNCEEA's work on SDGs. Statistics Canada will ensure smooth coordination between the task forces and UNCEEA.

AREA B2 – METHODOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT FOR NORMATIVE STANDARDS AND OTHER RESEARCH SEEA EEA (led by Anton Steurer, Eurostat)

Eurostat introduced the work of the SEEA EEA Technical Committee (SEEA EEA TC). In the past months, the SEEA EEA TC met twice. It discussed the Technical Recommendations on the SEEA EEA, fundraising for the SEEA EEA revision and the revised TORs of the group, among other things.

Actions:

1. The Bureau agreed to distribute the fundraising letter and concept note to ask for fundraising beyond the National Statistical Offices. It was stressed that for the SEEA EEA revision cash contributions need to be made to unlock the Eurostat money, in kind contributions are appreciated but not sufficient. Bureau members were highly encouraged to look for additional funds.
2. The Bureau agreed that the SEEA EEA Technical Recommendations can be sent out to the entire UNCEEA for final approval together with a document outlining the process of drafting of the document. UNCEEA members will be requested to agree on the process of drafting and only raise major methodological issues. The Bureau requested documents submitted for approval to the Bureau should be accompanied by a short paper outlining the process of development.
3. The Bureau approved the revised TOR of the SEEA EEA Technical Committee.

AREA C – DEVELOPMENT OF GLOBAL DATABASES FOR SEEA (led by Peter van de Ven, OECD)

OECD introduced the topic and the process behind the development of the SEEA DSDs. The idea is to limit reporting burden for countries. It is envisaged that countries will have the possibility to use an excel questionnaire that would automatically generate SDMX files for transmissions, similar to the national accounts. This tool would be provided by the international organization responsible for the data collection. The paper outlining the work on the development of the DSD will also be presented at the London Group meeting and finalized by the end of this year. Public consultation will be organized in the first half of 2018 and pilot countries will be able to start testing the DSD structure.

Two concerns were raised: (1) that the technical people prefer not to include aggregates in the SDMX code but this would be a useful feature for the compilation of accounts; and (2) the countries should be allowed to test the DSD structure before it is finalized. It was agreed that both of these issues are very important and that they should be discussed during the London Group meeting.

UNSD introduced the short-term plans for the energy accounts database and the process for the collection of energy accounts. Organization of an expert group meeting in early 2018 would be crucial for the development of the global database and to move towards a global data collection process.

Actions:

1. The Bureau supported the organization of the expert group meeting in early 2018 and asked UNSD to find funds for it. The expert group would discuss the methodology proposed to estimate energy accounts from energy balances as well as air emission accounts from emission inventories. Invitees would include experts on environmental-economic accounting as well as subject matter experts.

AREA D – IMPLEMENTATION AND STATISTICAL CAPACITY BUILDING (led by Joe de Beer, Statistics South Africa)

Statistics South Africa introduced the plans for the development of the Global Assessment report and its outline. UNSD clarified that the draft version of the report will be available before the end of November and that it will be submitted to the UN Statistical Commission as a background document.

Actions:

1. The Bureau agreed with the outline of the report and requested to include a section on the strategy towards meeting the implementation targets for the SEEA CF and SEEA EEA, and to change the term 'partial implementation.' Other editorial changes and will be incorporated in the drafting.

AREA E – A PRACTICAL STRATEGY FOR THE APPLICATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ACCOUNTING TO EMERGING POLICY IS-SUES (led by Lisa Wardlaw-Kelly, Australian Bureau of Statistics and INEGI)

ABS introduced the new Communications Strategy. It was further stressed that it is important to involve developing countries with less capacity in the communication of SEEA. The need for prioritization of outputs was also stressed, the website was identified as the main priority.

Actions:

1. The Bureau was requested to provide written comments on the Strategy by 30 October.
2. The importance of the work on SDGs was raised. As a result, it was agreed that Area E be split into two sub-areas: E1 on communication led by ABS, and E2 on SDGs and SEEA led by INEGI.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

1. Preparation of the UN Statistical Commission report: UNSD will circulate an outline of the UN Statistical Commission report to the area leads by the end of October. Area leads will provide their input to the report by 15 November. Input to the report is requested on the key outcome of the work in the areas of work and questions that the area leads would like the UN Statistical Commission to discuss and provide guidance on.
2. Next meeting was tentatively agreed to take place on 20 November at 14:00 NY time (13:00 Mexico, 21:00 CET, 22:00 Johannesburg, 7am Canberra on 21 November).