

Conclusions of the Seminar on Challenges in implementing the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) and measuring sustainable development

Session I: Measuring sustainable development in follow up to Rio+20

- The seminar stressed that there is a strong need to establish a clear connection between statisticians and the political level. And we have to start quickly, not to miss the current window of opportunity!
- A (possible) opportunity is the Open Working Group on sustainable development, which at its December meeting will have a session on means of implementation. This is a (perfect) opportunity to connect the statistical world even better with the political level.
- As a statistical community we have to cooperate closely together in the preparation for this. As well as to take into account and take advantage of the mandate of the recently formed UN Friends of the Chair. It has to be an inclusive and transparent approach in which we all have to cooperate to be as effective and efficient as possible.
- It is proposed to prepare an implementation strategy of the report of the joint taskforce for sustainable development (TFSD). We have to develop practical guidelines, which also provide a basis for harmonization of the various approaches.
- The advantage of the report of the joint taskforce and its suggested indicators is that it may provide a certain level of harmonization. But also leaves enough flexibility to take into account specific country needs, all the work done so far by others, and the national and regional initiatives.
- We have to:
 1. Continue working on the measurement of Global dimension and particularly with regards to the transboundary impacts
 2. Continue working on the measurement of Stock of Human and Social Capital both at the national level as well as the transboundary impacts.
 3. Consider measurement of sustainable development at the regional and sub-regional level.

We propose to install a new UNECE/OECD/EUROSTAT joint taskforce to further this work

Session II: Key challenges in implementing the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting

- The Seminar acknowledged and stressed the importance of following a modular and flexible approach as defined in the SEEA implementation strategy. Giving full consideration to national circumstances and requirements.
- In implementing SEEA country specific needs and policy demands are key drivers as well as data availability. Reliable 'basic' environmental data are a prerequisite for a successful implementation of SEEA. If resources are scarce it is better to first maximize the use of existing information within and outside the NSI, making investment where they will be the most effective and focus on basic data underpinning the priority environmental accounts.
- The ongoing debate on SDG's offers a (great) window of opportunity to further the implementation of SEEA. We should utilize this opportunity to the maximum.
- There is a clear need for stronger governance in the implementation of SEEA. International institutions should even better cooperate to be as efficient and effective as possible. They should launch instruments/programs to help and facilitate countries in the implementation of SEEA. The initiatives to create a Partnership Group for implementing SEEA and to create of a "Trustfund" fit this purpose.
- A permanent dialog with users of SEEA is essential, as well as clear and understandable communication of its results, focused on possible uses of SEEA data. This should be an integral part of the implementation strategy. Countries could and should learn from each other in this respect.
- We propose to create an electronic forum, allowing countries to
 1. Share (best) practices, including the communication of results
 2. Learn from each other's experience, including what went wrong and/or was not feasible.
 3. Create a platform for online discussion to easily consult with others in the process of implementing (parts of) SEEA

A very practical recommendation is to translate the SEEA-central framework in to other languages