

Joint UNECE/OECD Seminar on Implementation of SEEA
14-15 October 2015, Geneva, Switzerland

CONCEPT NOTE

I. Introduction

The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) decided in April 2014 to organize a joint UNECE/OECD seminar on implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), following the request of member States to provide a forum to share experiences on the SEEA implementation.

The seminar is prepared by an Organising Committee consisting of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Canada, National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, Statistics Netherlands, Statistics Sweden, Eurostat, OECD and UNECE.

The seminar will build upon other international activities related to the implementation of SEEA, such as:

- Work of the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEECA);
- Work of the London Group on Environmental-Economic Accounting;
- Eurostat activities on Environmental-Economic Accounting;
- OECD Implementation Programme for SEEA;
- Activities related to Ecosystem Capital Accounting, Land- and Ecosystem Accounting of the World Bank, the European Environment Agency (EEA) and others.

In addition, the seminar will take into account the processes and initiatives where SEEA provides an important framework for the development of indicators, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals and post-2015 Agenda, EU GDP and Beyond, OECD Green Growth Indicators, Climate Change related statistics and others.

II. Dates, venue and languages

The seminar will start at 9:30 on Wednesday, 14 October 2015 and finish at 17:30 on Thursday, 15 October. The seminar will be organised back to back with the OECD Task Force on the Implementation of SEEA (to be held on 16 October 2015). It will take place in the Palais des Nations, Geneva. English-Russian interpretation will be provided.

III. Objective and target audience

The main objective of the seminar is to share experience and knowledge on the implementation of SEEA and its use for various policy needs. Furthermore, the seminar will provide a forum to present and discuss the activities of international organisations related to implementation of SEEA, and contribute to their coordination.

The seminar will deal with the accounts which have been identified as a priority by many countries (including, for example, air emission, water, natural resources, energy, environmental-economic instruments, environmental goods and services, economy-wide material flow, and environmental protection expenditures).

The target audience is primarily producers of environmental-economic accounts, in particular the managers of environmental-economic account programs from National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and related agencies. Some national and international users will be invited to take into account the user perspective.

One expected outcome is that participants will arrive at a common understanding of the links and commonalities between environment statistics, SEEA and the System of National Accounts (SNA). The seminar is also intended to share and exchange experiences on the possibilities and good practices regarding the actual implementation of SEEA. Other outcomes are the increased knowledge about the activities of international organisations related to the implementation of SEEA and recommendations for possible follow-up actions.

It is expected that all participants have a basic knowledge of SEEA, while recognising that the participating countries are at different levels of implementation and knowledge about SEEA and its applications.

Countries and organisations who would like to prepare papers or presentations for the seminar should contact Mr. Michael Nagy (michael.nagy@unece.org).

IV. Draft Agenda

The sessions are organized in a sequence to discuss first, after a brief introduction of the SEEA framework, the policy uses and their link to SEEA; secondly, the implementation of SEEA and selected modules; and thirdly, more complex issues such as ecosystem accounting and other emerging issues. The final session will conclude and identify possible follow-up work.

SESSIONS:

1. Introduction, setting the scene

Session organizer: OECD

The session will introduce the agenda and the expected outcomes of the seminar. A short introduction will be provided to the SEEA Central Framework, the latest international developments and planned international activities.

2. SEEA policy uses, analytical tools and indicators

Session organizer: Statistics Netherlands

The session will discuss the purpose of SEEA by giving examples of concrete policy issues in the area of environment, and will show how environmental-economic accounts are being used to respond to these issues.

Analytical tools such as input-output analysis, decomposition analysis etc. will be presented in the form of national case studies. The session may also discuss how SEEA can be used to support the various international initiatives, such as the forthcoming UN Sustainable Development Goals, OECD Green Growth Indicators, Climate Change related statistics, etc.

Countries and international organisations will be invited to present examples of SEEA policy uses, analytical tools and indicators.

3. SEEA implementation

The session will give countries and international organisations the opportunity to present and discuss strategic, organizational and technical issues related to the implementation of SEEA.

Sub-sessions will include:

- a) Identification of priorities for the implementation of SEEA (organizer: Statistics Canada): International and national policy priorities, identification of SEEA modules for priority implementation. This sub-session will also inform about activities of international organizations.
- b) Institutional setting and co-ordination (organizer: Eurostat and the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic): Institutional aspects – co-ordination within national statistical offices (between departments producing accounts and departments providing source data), co-ordination between national statistical offices and other national institutions, etc.; bilateral and multilateral co-operation with other countries/organisations; legal basis, funding, development of implementation plans, etc.
- c) Production processes and capacity building (organizer: Statistics Sweden): Data sources, data gaps and methodological problems, data quality, dissemination, technical support needed, etc.

Country representatives will be invited to make presentations on their national experience in the various sub-sessions. International organisations will be invited to present implementation strategies and the state of play for different regions and country groups.

4. Emerging issues, including Ecosystem Accounting

Session organizer: Australian Bureau of Statistics

This session will inform about the developments and emerging issues related to SEEA, such as integration of geographical initiatives (UN Global Geospatial Information Management - GGIM), SEEA Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (SEEA AFF), links with the measurement of extreme events and disasters, climate change statistics, environmentally related transfers and/or quarterly emission accounts. The session will also inform about recent developments with Ecosystem Accounting and give the possibility to discuss issues related to measurement of ecosystem services, validation of ecosystems in monetary terms, etc.

5. Conclusions and recommendations for future work

Session organizer: UNECE and OECD

The final session will conclude the seminar, trying to identify possible follow-up actions. It will be organised in the form of small working groups to brainstorm on priorities for future work. The groups will report back to the plenary meeting on the recommendations made. A panel will draw final conclusions and recommendations for follow-up work and activities.