

3rd Joint OECD/UNECE Seminar on the Implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA)

21-22 February 2018, Geneva

CONCEPT NOTE

1 Background

The third *Joint OECD/UNECE Seminar on the Implementation of SEEA* will take place on 21-22 February 2018 in Geneva, following up from the two previous seminars in 2015 and 2016.

The aim of the seminars is to provide a platform for exchange of knowledge and experiences on SEEA implementation and to facilitate coordination between all relevant partners in the UNECE region. The seminars are planned to be held regularly with a long-term view to support implementation of SEEA.

All UNECE and OECD countries as well as other UN member countries can participate in the seminars. Participation is on self-funded basis. UNECE secretariat may be able to provide financial support for the participation from countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA).

2 General considerations

The previous SEEA seminar (3-4 October 2016 in Geneva) recommended to continue to exchange practical experience, advance the implementation of SEEA, and discuss coordination issues (see report of the meeting ECE/CES/2017/15/Add.5, paras 45-49¹). The main guiding principles for the seminars are:

- a) To produce tangible outputs which support the practical implementation of SEEA in countries (e.g. good examples of implementation plans, examples of policy applications, contributions to guideline documents, good examples of methodologies for compiling SEEA-accounts, commitments of countries on implementation);
- b) To add value to other relevant processes related to the implementation of SEEA² from the regional perspective, avoid duplication, and support the activities of the UNCEEA work

¹

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/ge.33/2016/mtg2/Report_SEEA_October_2016.pdf

² London Group on Environmental Accounting, UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEA), etc.

- programme, such as working area C (development of global databases for SEEA) and working area D (implementation and capacity building);
- c) To define a SEEA implementation plan in the UNECE region and to contribute to the monitoring of SEEA implementation;
 - d) To facilitate the coordination of activities of international organisations and countries related to the implementation of SEEA (e.g. capacity building activities).

3 Contents and expected outputs of the 2018 Seminar

The following needs for discussion and coordination have been identified by the Organising Committee³:

1. Stocktaking of regional priority settings and implementation plans (developing a baseline for monitoring of the implementation) – see session I;
2. Support in the development of national implementation plans – see session I;
3. Guidelines for SEEA implementation and new ways to generate data – see session II;
4. Coordination of capacity building activities – see session III;
5. Policy applications of SEEA – see session IV.

Discussions should focus on the five priority accounts identified by the UNCEEA for the development of international databases: energy accounts, air emission accounts, economy-wide material flow accounts, water accounts and land accounts.

It will be desirable to have presentations from different regions and countries with different level of development.

The seminar will include the following sessions:

I. National SEEA implementation plans

This session will be organised and chaired by OECD and UNECE.

It will present the status of SEEA implementation in the region based on the results of the *UNCEEA Global Assessment of Environmental-Economic Accounting and Supporting Statistics* and other sources, such as from stocktaking activities carried out by UNECE, ESCAP and the European Environment Agency.

The session will furthermore discuss how national SEEA implementation plans can be developed, how implementation priorities can be identified and how common challenges could be addressed.

Selected countries will be invited to present their national priority settings, how these priorities are reflected in their implementation plans and/or which problems they face. Experienced countries will explain how they started to compile SEEA accounts (initial priorities and how they were identified, publishing of first accounts – what was considered as good enough, resources needed to compile the

³ Representatives of National Statistical Offices of Australia, Canada, the Netherlands Kyrgyzstan and Sweden as well as from Eurostat, OECD, UNECE and UNSD.

first accounts, lessons learned, etc.). Less experienced countries will be invited to present their related activities and specific challenges.

Presentations should also refer to the use of SEEA for the compilation of the SDG indicators. This would help less experienced countries to identify their priority accounts.

Expected outputs:

- Overview on the current status of SEEA implementation in the UNECE region;
- Good case examples;
- Recommendations to countries to establish a national implementation plan;
- Possible solutions on how to overcome certain challenges;
- Suggestions for implementation commitments;
- List of priority areas and related challenges.

II. Guidelines for SEEA implementation and new ways to generate data

This session will be organised and chaired by Statistics Sweden and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The objectives of the session are to

- a) Update participants on available technical guiding material (e.g. renewed SEEA website, electronic training courses, technical notes, technical recommendations in support of SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting, etc.);
- b) Present new and emerging ways of producing data for SEEA (such as big data).

International organisations will present progress on the development of related guiding material, websites, technical notes and tools to estimate the accounts.

Selected countries will be invited to present experiences in using new techniques for the production of SEEA data.

Expected outputs:

- Information on availability of technical guidelines and recommendations;
- Exchange of knowledge and experience in using new ways to generate data;
- Recommendations for further development of guidelines and recommendations.

III. Coordination of capacity building activities

The session will be organised by Eurostat and UNSD.

It will contribute to the coordination of capacity building activities carried out by international organisations and National Statistical Offices of some countries (e.g. Canada, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands and Sweden).

International organisations and selected countries will give an overview of their recent, ongoing and planned capacity building activities.

A panel discussion, involving both providers and beneficiaries of technical assistance, will provide valuable feedback on how to improve this exchange.

Expected outputs:

- Overview of capacity building activities of international organisations and countries on SEEA implementation;
- Identification of areas of possible cooperation;
- Identification of possible synergies;
- Identification of areas of improvement of providing/receiving technical assistance.

IV. Policy applications of SEEA

The session will be organised and chaired by Statistics Netherlands and Statistics Canada.

It is a follow-up to a similar session of the 2016 seminar. Its goal is to give some good examples on the policy use of SEEA. The session will also discuss communication strategies in using the SEEA.

Examples will be presented by international organisations and national institutions, e.g. on the use of material flow accounts with regard to monitoring the circular economy.

Expected outputs:

- Good case examples on policy needs;
- Recommendations on communication.

V. Conclusions and follow-up activities

The final session will conclude the seminar and identify follow-up actions. It will discuss and agree on recommendations for further advancing the implementation of SEEA in the region.
