

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

4th October 2016, by teleconference

- **Present:** Bert Kroese (Chair), Lisa Wardlaw-Kelly and Mark Lound (Australia Bureau of Statistics), Andre Loranger (Statistics Canada), Arturo de la Fuente (Eurostat), Francisco Guillen and Raul Figueroa (INEGI, Mexico), Gerard Eding and Sjoerd Schenau (Statistics Netherlands), Francesco Tubiello (FAO), Peter van der Ven, Myriam Linster and Pierre-Alain Pionnier (OECD), Ivo Havinga and Alessandra Alfieri (United Nations Statistics Division), Glenn-Marie Lange (World Bank)
- **Regrets:** Romeo Recide (Philippines Statistics Authority), Joe de Beer (Statistics South Africa)

FOLLOW UP ON THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE JUNE 2016 MEETING OF THE UNCEEA AND DEVELOPING A PROGRAM OF WORK FOR THE UNCEEA

A note was circulated by UNSD in advance of the meeting which listed the action points laid out by the UNCEEA in its June meeting, grouped according to the six domains in the UNCEEA's mandate.

1. The chair noted that the UNCEEA agreed in its meeting in June 2016 that the Bureau will play a more active role in driving the work of the UNCEEA. In order to do this, the Bureau needs to draft a program of work for the next 3-4 years.
2. The Bureau agreed that they would discuss each of the six areas of work which fall within the UNCEEA mandate, and develop a way forward for each area. The Bureau agreed to identify members of the Bureau who would take the lead for each area. The role of these leads will be the following:
 - a. Act as a champion and provide leadership in advancing the assigned area of work
 - b. Develop more detailed work plans and strategies to advance the area of work
 - c. Coordinate with other members of the UNCEEA who have a role to play in advancing the area of work
3. The Bureau will then discuss progress in each of these six areas at subsequent meetings. For each area of work the Bureau agreed the following:

Areas A and E: Coordination and Promotion

- It was agreed that Statistics Canada will take the lead for this area of work. It was noted that international agencies are best placed to undertake a large part of the activities in this area, and Statistics Canada would be providing leadership and strategic direction.
- The list of activities for this area of work was considered a good starting point for the development of the programme of work.

Area B: Methodological development for normative standards and other research

- It was agreed that Statistics Netherlands (Gerard Eding) will take the lead for the work on advancing the SEEA Central Framework Methodology, as they are well

- placed given their role as Chair of the Technical Committee on the SEEA Central Framework (Sjoerd Schenau).
- It was agreed that Eurostat will take the lead on the work related to SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounts, which will include the creation of a Technical Committee for SEEA EEA. Eurostat will work with the eventual chair of the Technical Committee to advance this area of work.
 - The list of activities for this area of work was considered a good starting point for the development of the programme of work.

Area C: Development of Databases

- It was agreed that OECD (Myriam Linster and Peter van de Ven) will take the lead for this area, including strong cooperation with Eurostat, FAO and UNSD. It was noted that a large part of this work touches on international coordination issues.
- The list of activities for this area of work was considered a good starting point for the development of the programme of work. It was suggested to add to the list the development of SDMX Data Structure Definitions as some agencies are already testing DSD for some environmental accounts.

Area D: Implementation and statistical capacity building

- The Bureau agreed to ask Statistics South Africa whether they would be willing to act as lead for this area of work. The Bureau received confirmation from Statistics South African that they would lead this area of work.

Area E: Formulation of a statistical response on emerging policy issues

- The Bureau noted that this area of work includes; 1) linking the SEEA to the SDGs, 2) linking the SEEA to Climate Change Statistics, and 3) developing and communicating policy applications.
- The Bureau agreed in principle that Australia (Lisa Wardlaw-Kelly and Mexico will take the co-lead in this area of work subject to their confirmation. Mexico will confirm after internal consultations.
 - Mexico is well placed to co-lead the work on the SEEA and the SDGs being the co-chair of the IAEG SDGs. They will develop the strategy and work plan for this segment (subject to confirmation). It was noted that other members of the UNCEEA and the IAEG SDGs like Sweden and Germany should be involved in developing the strategy.
 - It was agreed that FAO, Eurostat, Italy and Statistics Netherlands will support Mexico in the development of the work related to climate change statistics.
 - It was agreed that Australia will lead the component related to policy applications and communication.

ACTIONS:

- Each lead will develop a more detailed programme of work with deliverables and timelines until 2020 with detailed actions and outputs for 2017. The lead will submit a 1-2 page program of work to the Bureau by 15 November. It is the role of the lead to identify who to involve for each area of work. The Bureau will then meet in the third week of November to discuss the individual proposals.

- Subsequently, the programmes of work developed by the leads will be submitted to the UN Statistical Commission as a Background Document. This will give us enough time to finalize the document by the end of January 2017.
- In drafting the more detailed programme of work on databases, the OECD will take into account the assessment that will take place in the coming month on energy and air emission accounts, and possible other areas, to be discussed at the next UNCEEA given the importance of this area.

OTHER BUSINESS

4. The Bureau was updated on the London Group meeting and was informed that good progress was made – many technical issues were discussed by the Group, and there are good levels of involvement in advancing this work. The Chair informed the Bureau about his conversation with the Chair of the London Group indicating that the work of the group will be very much aligned with the work of the UNCEEA. Members of the London Group need to be identified to contribute to the issues on the research agenda.

5. It was noted that Sustainability Accounting and Reporting by businesses is not currently included in the programme of work of the UNCEEA. This is a promising area in light of SDG developments and development of SEEA databases. This work could fit in with area B (methodological development), or area E (responses to emerging issues). Statistics Netherlands will develop a roadmap for this area, on the basis of which the Bureau can decide which area(s) of work it would like to be added to at the next meeting.

6. It was agreed that UNSD will send out a doodle-poll to establish a date for the next Bureau meeting, which will preferably be held between 21-25 November.

7. UNSD will also disseminate the work of the Bureau on the website, including information on the members and minutes of bureau meetings.