

## **Questionnaire for Representatives of International Organizations**

A first Draft, September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2004

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### **1. Please describe current activities of your organization in the area of environmental and economic accounts.**

Statistic Division is responsible for economic and social accounts, and it is progressively developing environmental statistics, progressively embracing the EEA methodologies to both guide its work with environmental statistics and indicators. However, environmental statistics is not yet part of the regular working program of the Division, and thus still relies on project and program budgetary lines.

Most importantly, with the collaboration of experts and countries in the region, ECLAC's Statistics Division is carrying out a regional project for the development of environmental statistics (REDESA). Key regional field experts from Colombia, Mexico, Brazil and Chile provide expertise and know-how to the ECLAC team and to the Network, participating substantially in the elaboration of conceptual frameworks and methodologies. We have been concentrating our work mainly in general statistics and to a lower degree, on environmental and economic accounts.

In the field of general environmental statistics, throughout last year, significant progress was achieved in developing the experts and institutions directory (currently, 48 experts and 26 institutions are registered) and the document data-base (currently 35 documents are abstracted and reside in our site). A database of environmental statistics is in preparation and is expected to be available by the end of 2004, drawing from the available information from the countries and regional agencies, and is based on a set of selected key variables that can progressively grow in time. The team is networking with an increasing number of experts and institutions that either lead or participate in the process of producing environmental data for statistics, indicators and environmental accounts in each country. Constant communication and interchange of information, ideas and methodologies is at the core of the project. Most participants in the network find this to be one of the most important strengths of REDESA.

We also have included the methodology of EEA as an integral part of our capacity building and technical meetings activities, particularly in the last year. Covering environmental statistics, indicators and EEA, in the last year alone, three regional expert meetings were held and eight missions of technical assistance and identifying data sources have been carried out in the region, and 4 additional missions are planned for this and next year. In the field of capacity building, 5 programs were designed and developed in a modular fashion to accommodate national needs. Overall, more than 160 participants and 6 instructors were involved in these courses delivered in Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador,

Colombia and Argentina. Finally, all products will be officially launched at the regional meeting of Environmental REDESA planned for April 2005 (to be announced).

In general, the project received positive feedback, and requests of the countries to sustain the network and provide capacity building and technical assistance are increasing. Therefore, ECLAC is working towards the continuation of these efforts and results in time. Nevertheless, the need for a more specific program of activities focusing on EEA in selected countries with stronger technical and data resources is perceived to be beneficial to catalyze these efforts within the region.

## **2. Please, describe future activities in the area of environmental and economic accounts.**

At the very least, ECLAC can follow up and disseminate the processes and results of ongoing EEA in LAC countries (Mexico, Colombia, Panamá and others)

ECLAC intends to disseminate the SCAEI and simplified training material within ECLAC and to the LAC countries, provided SCAEI is translated to Spanish.

The following activities depend upon obtaining financial cooperation to be able to develop them with substantial technical capacities:

- Identify international partners, to cooperate with ECLAC both technically and financially to potentiate capacity building and technical assistance in EEA for selected LAC countries (sub regional sets).
- Explore the possibility of developing a pilot of EEA with of 2-3 countries<sup>1</sup> in order to systematize the experience and know how on EEA implementation. This pilot program can develop EEA in a progressive and partial way, including parts of the assets and flows for relevant environmental functions depending on productive structure and ecological dynamics at the national level.
- Sensitizing and providing international for a to develop high level users (Ministers, Congress and Regional Governments) on EEA, to induce demand and built political and financial support at the national level.

## **3. In your opinion, what should be the role of the Task Force on environmental-economic accounting?**

The main role of the Task Force should be providing with the infrastructure and basic resources to construct a community. A community of people interested in developing EEA at the country and international level, including decision makers, experts and

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<sup>1</sup> The criteria for selecting these countries include level of development of the core SNA (1993), the availability of basic environmental data, and the institucional capacities.

practitioners. This community will support the persons leading or engaged in the complex efforts of developing EEA in different countries, and provide them with companionship and with a space in which to share and improve strategies, methodologies and initiatives.

Also, the task force can add value to the common task by locating resources to develop capacity building and technical assistance to given regions in EEA methodologies and implementation programs. Representing the international will to develop EEA for improving decision-making and sustainability, it can play a major role in identifying cooperation opportunities both in the methodological and financial areas, to help pilot countries in the regions, engage in or improve their EEA

The task force should also provide a for a (systematic meetings) for interchanging experiences, best practices and know how for three different communities: the decision makers at the political level, the experts, and the practitioners at the country level.

**4. In your opinion, which activities of the Task Force would best facilitate the implementation of environmental-economic accounting in the countries?**

The task force should develop the strategy and work plan for the next 5 years, with specific goals and results in mind.

Make sure that training material is developed and translated into different languages.

Cooperate in shaping capacity building programs that should be specific for each region (tailor made according to conditions and needs).

Cooperation in developing high level demand for EEA through organizing (2) international ministerial meetings to sensitize and hopefully provide political and financial support at the national level. It is advisable to develop these meetings in developing world cities.

Develop and sustain international experts meetings to share experiences and know how.

**5. In your opinion, which activities of the Task Force would best facilitate the promotion of the uses of environmental-economic accounting at the policy level?**

Co-organize high level meetings on EEA to promote political and financial support at the national level. This is a major obstacle at least for developing countries.

The task force, led by the UN, can help overcome national obstacles for the implementation of the EEA, as it has occurred in the field of other environmental accounts initiatives (i.e. environmental statistics and indicators).

It can also help obtain significant resources to promote EEA in the countries that have the will but lack the resources.

**Additional comments:**

To our understanding, the main obstacles for the implementation of EEA in Latin America could be summarized as follows. Please note that LAC countries are very heterogeneous, so some of the obstacles apply to some of the countries and not necessarily to all of them.

- Developing economies and its governments place a hierarchical first rate importance on growth and social needs and tend to postpone environmental issues (and accounts) for the time being
- Political support is more sensible to economic and social demands that compete for scarce governmental resources (human and financial)
- EEA is perceived as capable of making evident the complex connections amongst economic activities and environmental degradation, an image that can be adverse to macroeconomic expansive policies, currently strong in our region
- Lack of basic environmental data in some countries, even when the will to develop EEA is strong. This makes the implementation of EEA more difficult.
- EEA is seen as a major technical and financial effort for the statistical and environmental offices. Somehow it can be perceived as a luxury some countries can afford, in this sense other parallel initiatives that are more cost-effective, such as developing sets of environmental or sustainable development indicators, is preferred.
- Insufficient development of the System of National Accounts to further built satellite or integrated environmental accounting.
- EEA are simply unfamiliar to the less developed countries, which do not count on sufficient environmental data either.
- Insufficient development of technical capacities to develop and sustain a program of EEA.
- Insufficient financial resources.