

Statistical Commission  
Forty-third session  
28 February – 2 March 2012  
Item 3 (f) of the provisional agenda  
**Environment Statistics**

Background document  
Available in English only

REVISION OF THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS (FDES)

**OUTSTANDING ISSUES FOR FURTHER WORK**

(Prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division)

REVISION OF THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS (FDES)

OUTSTANDING ISSUES FOR FURTHER WORK

Introduction

1. The draft revised Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES) had been circulated for comments among the members of the Expert Group on the revision of the FDES and the members of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics before its submission to the 43<sup>rd</sup> session of the Statistical Commission as a background document.
2. UNSD received comments from 26 experts/organizations. Many of these comments were incorporated into the background document. There were, however, comments that were more complex in nature and therefore their consideration needed more time.
3. The present document lists those comments that have not been incorporated into the background document and will be considered during the next stage of the revision process.
4. Based on the comments, following a last consultation with the Expert Group in March-April, Chapters 1-3 of the revised Framework could be finalized for global consultation by May 2012.
5. Finalization of Chapter 4 on the Core Set of Environment Statistics for global consultation needs more time as the selection of the statistics to be included in the core set has to be an iteration process resulting from extensive discussions with experts, international organizations and specialized agencies.

General comments

6. The FDES is for the “development” of environment statistics. The aspects of countries at early stages of the development of their environment statistics programmes, with underdeveloped statistical infrastructure and very limited resources need strengthening in the document.
7. The main objective of environment statistics is to inform policy and decision makers. The links between the FDES and global environmental policy issues need to be made more evident.
8. An introduction and short overview need to be included in all chapters.

9. There are still a few remaining repetitions among and within chapters that need to be eliminated.

#### Comments on Introduction

10. The Introduction should be complemented with the definition of environment statistics, the objective and target audience of the FDES as well as an overview of the chapters.

#### Comments on Chapter 1: Overview of environment statistics

11. The relationship between environmental data/statistics/indicators, environment statistics and other types of environmental information need an improved and clearer description.

12. A new section should be added to this chapter briefly touching upon the statistical units, statistical population, characteristics and statistical parameters typical to environment statistics.

13. As environmental data come from many different sources, the parts on institutional aspects including collaboration at the sub-national level and the role of NSOs in the environmental information system need to be strengthened.

14. The outstanding role of geospatial statistics and GIS in environment statistics as well as in bringing together environment, social and economic statistics should be described in a new section.

#### Comments on Chapter 2: Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics

15. The line of thinking from the approaches considered (ecosystems, natural capital, the Driving force – Pressure – State – Impact – Response model etc.) to the conceptual foundation of the FDES should be made clearer by restructuring the chapter.

16. Illustrating the social and economic spheres within the human subsystem in Figures 2.1 and 2.2 would improve the understanding of the links among environment, social and economic statistics.

17. Figure 2.4 illustrating the relationship of the FDES with other frameworks, systems and indicator sets has to be redesigned as it is overcrowded and difficult to understand. .

### Comments on Chapter 3: Structure and components of the FDES

18. The chapter needs a final revision to delete remaining technical discussions of data issues and instead strengthen the focus on the relevance of the sub-components and statistical topics and the reasoning for their allocation.
19. Different allocation of certain topics (e.g. soil, natural disasters and environmental perception) among the five components should be given some consideration.
20. Issues related to land cover and land use need further clarification with FAO.
21. The topic of Human Settlements needs to be included in the components of the FDES explicitly.
22. Component 2 on environmental assets and their use should not be presented according to the structure of the SEEA; instead the link to the SEEA asset accounts should be indicated.
23. Component 4 describes the impact of the changes in the state of the environment on humans, currently restricted to the impact of natural disasters and the impacts of pollution on human health that are too detailed at the level of a statistical topic. The scope of the component should be expanded to other relevant topics and the existing topics should be condensed.

### Comments on Chapter 4: Core Set of Environment Statistics

24. The text in Chapter 4 does not make the objective of the core set and the criteria for selection clear enough and needs improvement.
25. Agreement on the selection of the statistics for the core set need longer time for appropriate consultations with experts, international organizations and specialized agencies.