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TIMELINE AND PROCESS FOR THE REVISION OF THE SEEA

Paper prepared by UNSD

(for discussion)

TIMELINE AND PROCESS FOR THE REVISION OF THE SEEA

A. Introduction

1. The United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) at its 40th session in February 2009 reaffirmed that the revision of the SEEA is a high priority project for the statistical community and urged the UNCEEA and the London Group on Environmental Accounting to work expediently on the revision of the SEEA.

2. The project management framework (PMF) for the revision of the SEEA outlining the deliverables, time frame and governance for the project was submitted as a background document to the 40th session of the Statistical Commission. The PMF identifies 2012 as the target date for the adoption by the UNSC of Volume 1 of the SEEA – the international statistical standard and the relevant parts of Volume 3 – the applications. It also envisages that Volume 2 consisting of those accounts that are highly policy relevant but for which consensus could not be reached will be submitted for endorsement by the UNSC in 2013.

3. This paper provides further detail on the timeline for the revision of the SEEA based on the timetable in the PMF as well as on the process of preparation of the final draft for adoption by the UNSC. It focuses in particular on the timeline for Volume 1 and related parts of Volume 3.

B. Timeline

4. The table in the annex provides a detailed timetable for the drafting of the Chapters, the review process and the preparation of the final complete draft of Volume 1. It is evident from the table that the timetable for the drafting of Volume 1 and parts of Volume 3 related to Volume 1 is very tight.

5. A draft annotated outline together with the timetable will be discussed at this meeting of the UNCEEA. The drafting of the chapters of the SEEA should start immediately to ensure that the timely finalization of the project. The interim editor and subsequently the editor, on the basis of the outcome papers reflecting the recommendations of the various groups, the existing text of the SEEA-2003 and the agreed annotated outline will start drafting the chapters.

6. It is assumed that on the average it will take three months for the drafting of each chapter and revision of previous drafts of chapters.

7. The table in the annex covers only marginally the drafting of Volume 3 and Volume 2 (highlighted in yellow and green respectively). As for Volume 3, it is envisaged that experts/consultants will draft papers on the contributions of the SEEA to various policy issues: one of these papers dealing with the contribution of the SEEA to Sustainable Consumption and Production was discussed at the 14th London Group meeting. Furthermore, plans are under way to prepare a paper on the contribution of the SEEA to climate change. The various contributions

will have to be incorporated into Volume 3 by the editor in early 2010 to ensure proper review of the draft.

8. A detailed timeline will have to be developed for Volume 2. At this time, an agreed list of issues for Volume 2 together with a detailed work plan needs to be developed and submitted to the UNCEEA for discussion at its fourth meeting in June 2009. Only then a detailed time table for the drafting of Vol.2 and the relevant parts of Vol. 3 can be prepared.

C. Process

9. The London Group and other technical expert groups have addressed and are addressing the issues in the issue list for the revision of the SEEA. Outcome papers presenting the recommendations of the groups are prepared and submitted for global consultation on the public website "Towards the revision of the SEEA" hosted in the UNSD website¹. The Editor drafts the Chapters on the basis of the agreed annotated outline, revises the Chapters on the basis of the comments received by the technical group (see below) and subsequently revises them to take into account comments received through the global consultation.

10. During the update of the 1993 SNA, the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on National Accounts had the role of reviewing draft chapters. Similarly, in the case of the revision of the SEEA, it may be advisable to establish a group of experts to support the editor in particular through critical reviewing and commenting on the draft chapters before they undergo global consultation as well as assisting the editor with additional text, when needed. The Group will be tasked to taking decisions, in consultation with the Bureau on controversial issues that may arise in the drafting and vetting of the revised SEEA. It is therefore advisable that the group is limited in size.

11. The UNCEEA and the Bureau will manage and oversee the revision process and will receive regular updates on the progress of the drafting. Upon their approval, the draft chapters and the draft SEEA will be submitted for global consultation. Furthermore, the final draft of the SEEA Vol.1 and parts of Vol. 3 will be submitted to the UNSC for its adoption upon recommendation by the UNCEEA.

12. The following four options may be considered with regard to a group to assist the editor:

- (a) The London Group;
- (b) A sub-group of the London Group consisting of a limited number of people;
- (c) The international and supranational agencies which have issued the SEEA-2003 and possible agencies that may issue the revised SEEA;
- (d) A technical tier of the Bureau of the UNCEEA may be established.

13. The advantages and disadvantages of the four options are discussed below.

¹ <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/seearev/>

Option (a)

14. The London Group on Environmental Accounting has the expertise to review and provide in depth comments on the text, however it consists of a large group of experts who work on SEEA related issues only as an additional task to their regular work assignments. Therefore it would be difficult for the members of the London Group to commit to review text over a long period of time, sometimes with short notice. Nevertheless, the London Group will have the opportunity to comment on the draft chapters as part of the global consultation.

Option (b)

15. A sub-group on the London Group could be established to assist the editor. The members of the sub-group would need to receive release time from their regular assignments in order to provide the necessary support. The governance of this group will be difficult to handle in case of controversy on the text.

Option (c)

16. This model follows the process of the update of the SNA and the agencies will have to be on board for the publication. In the SEEA revision though, some of the agencies that sign off on it, are not yet actively engaged in the revision process and may not be ready to take on this role. In addition, as opposed to the SNA, the SEEA revision has been a truly inter-governmental process.

Option (d)

17. The Bureau of the UNCEEA plays an oversight and managerial role in the revision process. It could be envisaged that the Bureau member nominate experts from their institutions to assist the editor. The experts will thus act on behalf of the Bureau on technical issues and raise any problems to the Bureau which will then alert the Committee. The members of the Bureau will have to be given release time from their regular work to be able to review the text and assist the editor.

D. Questions to the UNCEEA

18. The UNCEEA may wish to consider the following questions:

(1) Does the UNCEEA agree with the proposed timetable?

(2) Does the UNCEEA agree with the proposed process for drafting the chapters of the revised SEEA?

(3) Which option does the UNCEEA prefer to assist the Editor with reviewing the text?

Timetable for the revision of the SEEA – Vol. 1 and parts of Vol. 3 related to Vol. 1

	April 2009	May-June 2009	July-Sept. 2009	Oct.- Dec. 2009	Jan-March 2010	April-June 2010	July-Aug. 2010	Sept-Dec 2010	Mid 2011	End 2011	March 2012
Resolution of issues (London Group)	14 th Meeting London Group (Canberra) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement on a number of issues agreed by the LG Paper on the contribution of the SEEA to sustainable consumption and production (Vol.3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulation of recommendations on agreed issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review comments received from countries Preparation of issue papers for the London Group meeting in Dec. 	15 th Meeting London Group (Wiesbaden) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement on the remaining issues in the issue list Paper on the contribution of the SEEA to Climate Change (Vol.3) 	Prepare outcome papers	Provide input to the global consultation	Provide input to the global consultation	London Group meeting Provide input to the global consultation Discuss consistency issues across chapters Issues in Volume 2	Provide input to the global consultation		
Drafting of SEEA (Editor)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft annotated outline of Vol. 1 Draft timetable Vol.1 and parts of Vol.3 	Draft chapter on physical flow accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise draft chapter on physical flow accounts Prepare a set of recommendations for UNSC Draft chapter on monetary flow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise draft on monetary flow accounts First draft of chapter on physical asset accounts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise Chapter on physical flow accounts on the basis of global consultation Revise chapter on monetary flow accounts on the basis of comments from Bureau TG Work on chapter on monetary asset account 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise Chapter on physical asset accounts on the basis of comments from Bureau-TG Revise chapter on monetary flow accounts on the basis of global consultation Work on chapter on full sequence of accounts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise Chapter on monetary asset accounts on the basis of comments from Bureau-TG Revise chapter on physical asset accounts on the basis of global consultation Work on Chapter 1 and Chapter on the framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise chapter on full sequence of accounts on the basis of comments from Bureau-TG Revise chapter on monetary asset accounts on the basis of global consultation Complete draft Vol. 1 and parts of Vol. 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise chapter on full sequence of accounts on the basis of global consultation Revise complete draft SEEA 	
Review drafts by a technical group		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper on structure of Vol. 3 	Outcome papers	Draft on physical flow accounts	Outcome papers on remaining issues Draft on monetary flow	Chapter on physical asset accounts	Chapter on monetary asset accounts	Chapter on full sequence of accounts	Meeting Bureau-TG (early 2011) Complete draft Vol.1 and draft parts Vol. 3 SEEA		
UNCEEA		Fourth Meeting Volume 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of issues Detailed programme of work 				Fifth meeting UNCEEA Review progress of work			Sixth meeting UNCEEA Complete draft SEEA		
Global consultation			Recommendations on selected issues		Chapter on physical flow accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations on remaining issues Chapter on monetary flow accounts 	Chapter on physical asset accounts	Chapter on monetary asset accounts	Chapter on full sequence of accounts Complete draft SEEA		
UNSC					Recommendations on issues					SEEA	<i>Adoption of Volume 1 and endorsement of parts of Vol. 3</i>

