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Elaboration on SEEA for the part on Extensions and Applications
Paper prepared by UNCEEA sub-group[1]

(for discussion)

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Proposals developed by UNCEEA sub-group

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A. Background

1. Over the past few years the London Group has discussed at its meetings the possible content and structure of a Volume 3 for the revised SEEA, in this paper referred to as SEEA Extensions and Applications (or Part III). In general terms, this part of the SEEA has been conceived as a way in which the main potential extensions and applications of the SEEA can be made clear to analysts and policy makers.

2. At the meeting of the UNCEEA in June 2010, an initial discussion on potential content and structure for this part of the SEEA took place. The meeting agreed that a UNCEEA sub-group be formed to take forward the following five issues.

    a. The focus – i.e. elaboration, applications, policy neutrality, etc
    b. The structure and content (including the links to the proposed "glossy" publications)
    c. Timing with target dates for content by February 2012 and February 2013
    d. The status in relation to SEEA central framework as the internationally accepted conceptual framework
    e. The process for endorsement

3. A group of 7 UNCEEA members and the Editor of the revised SEEA (the "sub-group") was formed with the task reporting back to the Bureau of UNCEEA in early 2011 and to UNCEEA in June 2011 for the purpose of making a final decision on the approach that will be taken. As part of this process, it was also agreed that the London Group should be consulted and a paper to the 16th London Group meeting was prepared. This paper reflects conclusions developed by the sub-group following discussions with the London Group in October 2010 and discussion with the Bureau in February 2011.

4. It is fair to say that there has been a wide range of suggestions on the possible scope, purpose, content and structure. However, after consideration and discussion a relatively common view has emerged of what should be provided and to whom it should be aimed.

5. Of particular importance are the links between this part of the SEEA and other material, generically referred to in this paper as implementation material, that could be developed for the purposes of promoting and supporting compilation and use of SEEA based data sets. A discussion of this broader context is commenced in this paper, although it is recognised that this should be the focus of another discussion by UNCEEA as it is outside the direct remit of the sub-group.

6. This paper is structured to consider the target audience in Section B, the range of possible implementation and promotional material for the SEEA in Section C, proposals on style, content and structure in Section D and a broad sense of timeframes and co-ordination in Section E. Section F contains conclusions based around the five questions posed by UNCEEA to the sub-group and issues for discussion and decision.

B. The audience

7. The SEEA and its range of accompanying implementation and promotional material should be considered with three general audiences in mind – (i) policy managers, (ii) analysts and researchers, and (iii) compilers. Importantly, these audiences should be considered in terms of the different roles that people play rather than in terms of their particular level in an organisation or in terms of the organisation or agency with whom they work. It is likely to be the case that the distinction between policy managers and policy analysts is very blurred at times and it will often be the case that agencies both compile data and analyse and develop policy.

8. For this paper the following characterisations apply to the three audiences:

   i.   *Policy managers*: Those staff who take decisions about government and private sector policies and research agendas or who are responsible for managing the development of policies in line with directions set by senior executives.;
   ii. *Analysts and researchers:* Those staff undertaking analysis and research in government departments, international organisations, academia and other relevant research agencies (eg. non-profit institutions); and
   iii. *Data producers and compilers:* Those staff who undertake the construction and population of relevant datasets either in separate statistical agencies or in data units within larger organisations (both government and private sector).

9. The conclusion of the sub-group is that Part III of the SEEA should be targeted primarily at groups 2 and 3 and that group 1 should be the focus of other implementation and promotional material (see Section C below). In part, this conclusion is linked to the proposed content and style to be discussed in Section D, but it is clear that the material in this part is unlikely to be sufficiently summarised to cater effectively for group 1. At the same time, if the material was highly summarised, then the needs of groups 2 and 3 would be unlikely to be met.

10. Further, it is the conclusion of the sub-group that the material should be of particular relevance from an analytical and interpretative perspective rather than from a data compilation perspective. Although it has been observed that there may be considerable overlap in the roles between groups 2 and 3, the outputs from each group are quite different. An important objective is to help build a bridge between those people conducting specific research, who might be able to use SEEA-based data sets and those people building the data sets that are to be used. This "bridge building" would seem to be a healthy general objective for the SEEA.

11. The importance of the choice of audience concerns the style and approach to the structure and eventual drafting of this part of the SEEA. At the same time, the choice of audience is not intended to exclude any reader or user. Rather, the choice of primary audience is needed such that an appropriate structure and style can be determined. In part, the inability to find resolution on this matter in the past has been due to the attempt to design a single product that meets everyone's needs.

C. The range of implementation and promotional material

12. A range of different material has emerged as being relevant for the promotion and implementation of SEEA such that awareness and use of SEEA and compilation of data sets based on SEEA might advance and develop as quickly as possible.

13. Table 1 lists the suggestions that have been identified by the sub-group and also notes where work is underway to advance the range of implementation material.

Table 1: Range of possible SEEA implementation and promotional material

	Implementation material	Work status
1	SEEA Central framework and Experimental ecosystem accounts (relevant for implementation in the sense of defining "what" should be measured.)	Central framework: Outline agreed and drafting commenced, global consultation on chapters complete August 2011. Experimental ecosystem accounts: Planning underway
2	SEEA Extensions and Applications	Planning underway
3	SEEA subsystems SEEA-Water, SEEA-Energy, etc.	Developed, being developed and suggested
4	International Recommendations (IR) IR – water statistics, IR energy statistics, etc.	Developed, being developed and suggested
5	SEEA compilation guides The compilation of energy accounts is to be included in the planned Energy Statistics Compilers Manual (ESCM).	Being developed, suggested but no planning as yet. Also possible at the level of SEEA sub-systems eg SEEA-Water, SEEA-Energy
6	SEEA training courses	Suggested but no planning yet. Also possible at the level of SEEA sub-systems eg SEEA-Water, SEEA-Energy. For example, material is well developed with respect to water accounts.
7	SEEA international statistical questionnaire	Suggested but no decision or planning yet
8	Glossy policy oriented publications	Being developed for water accounts and sustainable consumption and production.
9	Country based examples of SEEA based outputs available in SEEA Knowledge base	Some currently accessible via UNSD/UNCEEA website http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/ceea/archive/Introduction.asp
10	Promotional slides	Some examples but not widely available.
11	Journal articles	Suggested but no planning as yet.

14. The SEEA Extensions and Applications can thus be seen as an element of a suite of materials for the SEEA. Of particular note is the distinction that has been made between Part III of the SEEA and the so-called "Glossy" policy-oriented publications. These publications have been discussed at a number of UNCEEA and London Group meetings. The conclusion

of the sub-group is that they should be considered as a distinct product from the SEEA Extensions and Applications.

15. To provide a link between the range of implementation material in Table 1 and the different audiences outlined in Section B the following table (Table 2) has been put together. It suggests how the different audiences might best be served by the development of particular products/materials. It is not intended to indicate that certain products are not useful or interesting for all audiences. Rather, it is intended to indicate that when structuring and drafting a given product the particular audience/s proposed should be the primary audience/s in mind. This table may form the basis for planning and prioritising the broader promotion and implementation of the revised SEEA.

Table 2: Implementation and promotional material by type of audience

Audience/Role	Implementation and promotional material
Policy managers	"Glossy" policy oriented publications
	Promotional slides
	Country based examples in Knowledge Base
Analysts and researchers	SEEA Extensions and Applications
	Glossy publications
	Country based examples on the web
	Journal articles
	Training courses
Data producers and compilers	SEEA Extensions and Applications
	SEEA Central framework
	SEEA Experimental ecosystem accounts
	International recommendations on environmentally related statistics (eg International Recommendations on Water Statistics)
	Compilation guides
	Training courses
	Country based examples in Knowledge Base

D. Style, content and structure

16. With regard to the content and structure, the conclusion is that it should focus on different applications, extensions and techniques. Other alternatives considered were (i) a structure based on different policy questions and (ii) a structure based on different SEEA datasets.

17. A policy based structure would seem to be best suited for a target audience of policy managers who, as discussed, are not thought to be the best primary target audience. Also a policy based structure by definition requires consideration of an appropriate choice of policies and this may both complicate the drafting and clearance process to avoid politicization of the SEEA. It may also compromise the multipurpose nature and universal applicability of the SEEA as internationally accepted framework. Following an application and technique based structure avoids this issue.

18. A structure based on SEEA datasets would seem the most limiting approach as it would be only of direct relevance to data producers and compilers and may exclude from discussion analysis that involves data from different SEEA datasets or analysis using non-SEEA data.

19. Of course there are many potential applications, extensions and techniques. It is suggested that focus be on those areas that are linked to the comparative advantages of the SEEA concepts and data sets. Thus those applications, extensions and techniques to be included should be those that:

- Integrate and compare physical and monetary data (such as in the form of hybrid accounts)
- Look across fields of study – eg water and energy – either in terms of aggregation or in terms of comparative analysis
- Address accounting structures and relationships (including alternative presentations of data)
- Involve linkages and extensions of SEEA concepts to demonstrate the flexibility of the system and invite investigation of other subjects with links to the environment.

20. Based on these considerations the following structure is proposed (Table 3). This proposal will be refined following discussion at UNCEEA.

21. There is general agreement in the sub-group that SEEA Extensions and Applications should include applications and techniques relevant to both concepts and datasets from the SEEA central framework and experimental ecosystem accounts. Hence, there may be additional ideas for inclusion that emerge once the direction and outline of SEEA experimental ecosystem accounts has been discussed and determined.

Table 3: Proposed structure for SEEA Extensions and Applications

Presentation and organisation of SEEA data	Time series data
	Data by geographical areas, datasets referenced using information on location (spatially enabled)
Extensions of the SEEA central framework	Sector and sub-sector accounts
	Household and informal sector accounts
	Eco-tourism
	Linkages to population and labour data
Applications of SEEA	Resource efficiency and productivity indicators (use of hybrid tables)
	Sustainable production and consumption patterns
	Analysis of environmentally related production, taxes and subsidies
	Analysis of net wealth and depletion
Analytical techniques	Structural Input-Output analysis and GE modelling
	Consumption based I-O analysis / Footprint techniques
	Decomposition analysis
	Composite indicators

22. The conclusion of the sub-group is that the style and tone should be explanatory. While there should be a reasonable degree of detail to explain the different applications, extensions

and techniques, the coverage should also be somewhat introductory with references to more detailed material being provided.

23. There was discussion on the potential role of examples of extensions, applications and techniques being provided in this part of the SEEA. There is general agreement that to effectively explain the material numerical examples would be beneficial. It is recommended that the choice of data and numerical examples should be made at the time of drafting pending decisions on the structure and content of this part of the SEEA.

E. Timeframes

24. It is recommended that the drafting of this part should be undertaken in two key phases. Following decisions on the direction and intent, the first key phase involves individual authors being chosen to write draft text on specific elaborations, applications and techniques. The second key phase would involve the SEEA Editor bringing this draft content together. Following this phase, the draft would be circulated for global consultation before being finalised and submitted for UNSC endorsement. A proposed timeline for these steps is presented in Table 4.

25. It is noted that there is a potential complication in the timing for the preparation of this part given the in principle agreement that the material in Part III should cover topics relating to both the central framework and experimental ecosystem accounts. While text of the central framework will be complete one year in advance of the deadline for this part of the SEEA, the experimental ecosystem accounts text will be drafted in parallel. This matter of co-ordination should be considered once decisions have been made on the appropriate directions and content for experimental ecosystem accounts and SEEA Extensions and Applications at the UNCEEA meeting in June 2011.

Table 4: Proposed phases and timeframes for the drafting of SEEA Extensions and Applications (Part III)

Timing	Phase/Action
June 2011	UNCEEA decision on content and structure of SEEA Part III
Sept – Oct 2011	Finalise structure and content
Nov 2011 – May 2012	Drafting of material on individual applications and techniques by selected authors
June - Aug 2012	SEEA Editor to bring content together
Sept – Oct 2012	Global consultation
November 2012	Finalise draft
December 2012	Approval of draft by UNCEEA
February 2013	Present to UNSC for endorsement

F. Conclusions and recommendations

26. The UNCEEA sub-group was given five areas to consider in relation to the development of SEEA Extensions and applications. This section responds to each of those areas.

    a. *The focus.* It is recommended that the focus of this part be on explaining extensions, applications and techniques that can be applied using SEEA concepts and data sets based on the SEEA. The audience should be both analysts and researchers and data

compilers, but coming from an analytical perspective. The general objective of the volume should be to build a bridge between people in these different roles.

b. *The structure and content (including the links to the proposed "glossy" policy oriented publications).* It is recommended that this part should be structured by type of application, extension and analytical technique. It should be developed as a distinct product within the broader context of material for the promotion and implementation of the revised SEEA that will include training courses, compilation guides and glossy policy oriented publications. The glossy publications should be considered a separate product and targeted at policy managers in the first instance.

c. *Timing with target dates for content by February 2012 and February 2013.* A broad timetable has been proposed involving decisions by UNCEEA on broad content and structure by June 2011, draft text on individual techniques by selected authors by May 2012, a draft complete by August 2012, global consultation in September/October 2012, finalisation of the volume in November 2012 and endorsement by UNSC in February 2013.

d. *The status of SEEA Extensions and Applications in relation to the central framework of the SEEA as an internationally accepted conceptual framework.* It is recommended that SEEA Extensions and Applications does not have status as an international statistical standard.

e. *The process for endorsement of the part on extensions and applications.* The process for endorsement should be aligned to the timeframes and phases proposed under point (c). It is recommended that global consultation on a draft should take place ahead of finalisation for approval by UNCEEA and endorsement by UNSC in February 2013.

Issues for discussion and decision

27. UNCEEA members are invited to comment on and take decisions regarding:

   i.   The proposed focus and audience for SEEA Extensions and Applications
  ii.   The proposed structure and content for SEEA Extensions and Applications
 iii.   The proposed timetable for the completion of SEEA Extensions and Applications with particular reference to the linkages to the finalisation of SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounts (Part II).
 iv.   The recommended status of SEEA Extensions and Applications in relation to the SEEA Central Framework.