



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
STATISTICS DIVISION
UNITED NATIONS

ESA/STAT/AC.301
UNCEEA/11/3c

**Eleventh Meeting of the UN Committee of Experts on
Environmental-Economic Accounting
New York, 22-24 June 2016**

Finalizing SEEA Energy and SEEA Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries

This material was prepared by UNSD and FAO

1. Background

As the SEEA is increasingly taken up as the framework to organize integrated environmental-economic information, the demand to produce thematic SEEAAs as well as compilation and training materials increases. Such documents can take a number of forms including subsystems to the SEEA, international recommendations and compilation guidance. Section 2 of this note puts into context the various publications in support of the implementation of the SEEA; it builds on a paper on the typology of publications supporting the SEEA implementation which is presented as a background document to the 11th UNCEEA meeting. The note then briefly summarizes details on the steps taken since the Statistical Commission; for more details see background paper on the process of drafting the SEEA Energy and SEEA Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (SEEA AFF) and proposes steps for their finalisation.

2. Publications in support of the implementation of SEEA

There are several types of publications that support the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework, as indicated in the background paper to this session. These include:

- *Thematic internationally agreed methodological publications* such as the SEEA Water, SEEA Energy and SEEA Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. These are generally referred to as subsystems of the SEEA and are fully consistent with the SEEA Central Framework (SEEA CF). As such they belong to the category of statistical standards. The scope, definitions and classifications used in the subsystems follow directly from the SEEA CF. Similarly, the tone, style and presentation of such publications are very rigorous and focus exclusively on concepts, definitions and classifications, in the same vein as the SEEA CF. They aim to provide further details and clarification related to the relevant theme of the publication. This is done through, among other, the elaboration of relevant classifications; explanation of concepts as they relate to the particular theme (e.g. residency vs territory principle in the context of energy); and, expanded tables to provide further breakdowns on particular industries and/or products that are already included in the accounts as laid out in SEEA Central Framework.
- *International recommendations* such as the International Recommendation for Water Statistics (IRWS) and International Recommendations for Energy Statistics (IRES). These support the implementation of the SEEA by providing further details on the data items needed to populate the SEEA accounts for particular topics. Their focus is often on basic statistics and hence care should be exercised when drafting such manuals to ensure that they are aligned with the SEEA and its subsystems. The tone, style and presentation of such publications are very rigorous and focus exclusively on concepts, definitions and classifications, in the same vein as the SEEA CF. Their development and adoption process may be different from the subsystems (e.g. IRWS was developed entirely under the auspices of the UNCEEA, IRES was developed by the Oslo Group on Energy Statistics with the UNCEEA being kept informed of the developments).
- *Guidelines, handbooks and manuals* such as the Water Statistics and Accounts Compilation Guidelines, Energy Statistics Compilers Manual, the SEEA Implementation Guide, the Technical Recommendations on Ecosystem Accounts, etc. These include guidelines,

handbooks and manuals that provide guidance on how to compile basic statistics. As such they provide examples of practical compilation issues.

- *Training materials* based on the various methodological publications such as the blended learning on the SEEA and the training materials on ecosystem accounts, water and energy accounts. Their main purpose is to aid in capacity building and training of practitioners. Training materials can take a number of forms including presentations and exercises, and can be delivered in a remotely and in-person. This topic is to be further discussed in the session on implementation.

3. SEEA Energy and SEEA Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries

The SEEA Energy and SEEA AFF are subsystems of the SEEA. The UN Statistical Commission at its 47th session discussed two subsystems of the SEEA: SEEA Energy and SEEA Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. In its report the commission “[r]equested the Committee of Experts to finalize the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Energy (SEEA-Energy) and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (SEEA Agriculture) with urgency, given their importance for the implementation of energy accounts and agriculture, forest and fisheries accounts in support of the implementation of the SEEA Central Framework for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and encouraged their expedient implementation in countries”¹.

Finalizing SEEA Energy

The SEEA Energy was circulated to the Committee in the 3rd quarter of 2015 for final review before submission to the Statistical Commission. The Commission discussed the manual at its 47th session in March 2016 as part of the agenda item on environmental economic accounts. During the discussions, a number of countries and organizations noted that they would like to provide further comments on the SEEA Energy.² UNSD has corresponded with experts in the relevant countries and organizations in order to solicit comments on the SEEA-Energy. The comments received have been incorporated in the updated draft which has been posted as a background document to this meeting. It should be noted that there are no substantive changes between the current draft and the one circulated to the Committee during the 3rd quarter of 2015.

The SEEA-Energy is a sub-system of the SEEA Central Framework, the international statistical standard for environmental economic accounting, and is entirely consistent with this framework. The starting point for the development of the SEEA-Energy is the SEEA Central Framework. The SEEA-Energy brings together the energy-specific tables and accounts of the SEEA Central Framework and elaborates in more detail the links between energy accounts and energy statistics and balances as described in IRES. It aims to provide a bridge between the statistical and energy communities.

On the basis of the above considerations, the SEEA Energy being a subsystem of the SEEA Central Framework could be endorsed by the UNCEEA as an internationally agreed methodological document providing further details on energy accounts pending the review of the manuscript by the

¹ See Economic and Social Council, Official Records 2016, Supplement No. 4, Statistical Commission, Report of the forty-seventh session.

² India, Norway, Sweden and Eurostat

Technical Committee on the SEEA Central Framework to ensure the SEEA Energy's full consistency with the SEEA Central Framework. Since the SEEA Central Framework is an international standard and the SEEA Energy is entirely consistent with it, the Statistical Commission has requested the UNCEEA to finalize and approve it. With this decision of the Statistical Commission, there is no need to resubmit the SEEA Energy to the UN Statistical Commission.

Finalizing SEEA Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

SEEA Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (SEEA AFF) has been under development since mid 2013 following endorsement of the project by UNCEEA. Two global consultation processes have been held – the initial consultation taking place in late 2014 and the final consultation occurring through December 2015 and January 2016. The final consultation process showed broad endorsement of the content of the draft. An updated manual taking into consideration the most substantive comments was submitted to the Statistical Commission. The Commission discussed the manual at its 47th session in March 2016 as part of the agenda item on environmental economic accounts. During the discussions, in line with the tenor of the feedback from the Global Consultation, there was a broad welcoming of the SEEA AFF (EU, Samoa), while at the same time one country (Sweden) suggested more testing was required.

Since March, FAO has continued to correspond with experts in countries and organizations in order to effectively incorporate all of the comments received through the consultation processes. The comments received have now been incorporated in the updated manual, which has been posted as a background document to this meeting. It should be noted that there are no substantive changes between the current draft and the one submitted to UNSC47. Rather, specific issues raised by some countries and international organizations were implemented through improved clarification of concepts and ensuring consistency in text across the document. One notable example of an issue raised is the relationship between Air Emission accounts in SEEA CF, SEEA AFF and the tables for reporting to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which has been elaborated in the latest draft. A short paper with further details is included as a background document to the 11th UNCEEA meeting.

SEEA Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries is a sub-system of the SEEA Central Framework, the international statistical standard for environmental economic accounting, and is completely consistent with this framework. SEEA AFF aims to apply the SEEA CF to Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, pointing out linkages among and between these sectors, the environment and the economy and also highlighting the connections between underlying physical data in these areas and the conceptual framework of the SEEA.

On the basis of the above considerations and following the same approach for SEEA Energy, the SEEA Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries could be endorsed by the UNCEEA as an internationally agreed methodological document, aimed at providing further details on agricultural, forestry and fisheries accounts, pending the review of the manuscript by the Technical Committee on the SEEA Central Framework to ensure the SEEA AFF's full consistency with the SEEA Central Framework. Since the SEEA Central Framework is an international standard and the SEEA AFF is entirely consistent with it, the Statistical Commission has requested the UNCEEA to finalize and approve it.

With this decision of the Statistical Commission, there is no need to resubmit the SEEA AFF to the UN Statistical Commission. The UNCEEA is invited to provide its views on:

- the endorsement of the SEEA Energy as the internationally agreed methodological document for energy accounts in support of the SEEA Central Framework as international statistical standard, following its final review by the Technical Committee of the SEEA Central Framework ?
- the endorsement of the SEEA Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries as the internationally agreed methodological document for agricultural, forestry and fisheries accounts in support of the SEEA Central Framework as international statistical standard, following its final review by the Technical Committee of the SEEA Central Framework ?