

Project Management Framework for the Guidelines for the Compilation of Water Accounts and Statistics

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A. Introduction

1. At its 38th session in 2007, the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) adopted the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water (SEEA-Water) recognizing a significant demand from the users' community. The UNSC encouraged the implementation of SEEA-Water in countries. As a result, today more than 60 countries in the world are implementing or planning to implement water accounts.

2. The SEEA-Water is the result of joint efforts of the statistical community under the auspices of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEA), including a broad consultation within the statistical and water communities. The SEEA-Water was adopted in 2007 as an interim standard, pending the adoption of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA).

3. With the adoption of the SEEA Central Framework as an international statistical standard at the 43rd session of the UNSC in March 2012, the SEEA-Water needs to be reviewed for consistency with the standard. However, the elevation of the SEEA to a statistical standard did not have a significant impact on the basic concepts and definitions of the SEEA-Water since they served as inputs in the drafting of the SEEA Central Framework. Some minor differences remain, in particular concerning the presentation of the accounts and tables.

4. After the adoption of the SEEA-Water the UNSC requested the United Nations Statistics Division to develop and submit to the Statistical Commission at its 39th session in 2008, an implementation strategy for the SEEA-Water, taking into account the fact that countries were at different stages of development of environment statistics and environmental-economic accounts.

5. After an extensive consultation with countries and discussions at the UNCEEA, the London Group on Environmental Accounting, as well as at six workshops or training programmes on water accounts held during 2007, the strategy for the implementation of the SEEA-Water was presented to the UNSC at its 39th session in 2008.

6. The strategy aims at integrating SEEA-Water into the national policy framework of integrated water resources management within national statistical systems. It puts great emphasis on linking the implementation of water accounts to users' demand as well as more broadly into national economic policies. The Statistics Division is working in close collaboration with countries and international agencies developing synergies and supporting statistical initiatives to improve water statistics programmes.

7. The implementation strategy comprises the following four components:

- (a) Development of the International Recommendations for Water Statistics (IRWS), accompanied by guidelines on supplementary data collection and compilation;
- (b) Development of training and promotional material;

- (c) Development of a technical cooperation programme consisting of regional activities as well as pilot projects in selected countries in various regions;
- (d) Harmonization of international data collection activities with the SEEA-Water concepts and definitions.

8. As part of the implementation strategy, the International Recommendations for Water Statistics (IRWS) were developed and after a thorough consultation process the IRWS were adopted by the UNSC at its 41st session in 2010.

9. The implementation strategy has focused on the development and strengthening of the processes for the collection and compilation of basic data, integration of data in the SEEA-Water framework for analysis and interpretation, and the derivation of policy relevant indicators. Considerable efforts have been made in understanding the data development processes in countries, definitions, classifications, as well as data availability and quality. Furthermore developing partnerships with the various data producers and users has been key in the success of the projects.

10. The recent elevation of the SEEA to a statistical standard is expected to renew interest in the implementation of environmental-economic accounts in countries, and in particular water accounts due to the importance of water for development, and the increasing water stress in many countries and regions.

B. Scope of work

11. The UNCEEA has recognised the importance of developing compilation guidelines to assist countries with the development of water accounts and statistics, considering the high demand for supporting materials on the implementation of water accounts and statistics. The ad-hoc training materials developed for the workshops provide the basis for developing the Guidelines.

12. The Guidelines should provide country experts and trainers with a comprehensive and reliable set of materials for assisting the staff of National Statistics Offices, Water Ministries and Agencies and other stakeholders in countries with the process of implementation of water accounts and statistics for developing a monitoring system for water policies.

C. Process to produce the Guidelines

13. It is envisaged that the Guidelines will be published as a hard copy publication that will include case studies and practical examples. A Knowledgebase will complement the hard copy publication with additional resources, such as presentations, worked examples, standardized tables, and diagrams, which will constitute a “living” source of materials constantly updated.

14. The preparation process of the hard copy publication will involve the following stages:
- 1. Developing of modules, case studies and worked examples for specific topics.
 - 2. Drafting of document.
 - 3. Reviewing of document.

15. In the first stage, modules will be developed to address specific practical aspects of the implementation of water accounts and statistics. Examples will be developed to illustrate each of the key aspects in the implementation process. Case studies will be collected from different countries. The members of the editorial group will participate throughout the whole process of elaboration of the document, providing guidance and inputs to the document.

16. In the second stage, each chapter of the document will be drafted incorporating the different modules, examples and case studies prepared in the first stage.

17. In the third stage, the document will be reviewed by different groups of experts, including an expert group on water accounts and statistics as well as the London Group on Environmental Accounts.

18. In order to steer the process of elaboration of the Guidelines, as well as to provide inputs to the document, an **Editorial Board**, consisting of 7 to 10 experts representing countries and organizations, is in the process of being formalized. The editorial board will have periodic meetings mostly by teleconferences.

19. An expert group including producers and users of water information from various countries and organizations, similar to the one that reviewed the SEEA-Water and the IRWS, will be formed to review the complete draft of the document. The document will also undergo a broad consultation among key stakeholders, and then be submitted to the UNSC for endorsement.

20. It is expected that the process will take approximately two years (from **March 2012 to March 2014**). Work has already started with the drafting of selected modules. An annotated outline has been produced, attached in Annex I.

21. The roadmap from March 2012 till March 2014 is summarized in the table below.

March 2012	Draft outline and preparation of modules, examples and case studies. Request of inputs from the members of the editorial board.
June 2012	Presentation of the project to the UNCEEA
October 2012	Presentation of a first draft to the London Group
June 2013	Presentation of complete draft to the UNCEEA for comments
June 2013	Presentation of the complete draft to the expert group for comments.
September 2013	Revised complete draft submitted for broad consultation
March 2014	Final draft submitted for endorsement by the UNSC

Annex I

Annotated Outline

Guidelines for the Compilation of Water Accounts and Statistics

Chapter 1 DEVELOPING AN INTEGRATED MONITORING FRAMEWORK FOR WATER

This chapter will explain how the System of Environmental Economic Accounts for Water (SEEA-Water) and the International Recommendations for Water Statistics (IRWS) informs the policy frameworks and the strategic approach to their implementation.

The chapter will discuss the different water policy needs and how they can be organized using a structure of quadrants with broad policy objectives. These policy objectives range from access to water, to water supply and demand, to water quality, and extreme hydro-meteorological events.

The chapter will also discuss the institutional arrangements needed to implement the accounts. It will present case studies of countries that have implemented the SEEA-Water.

Chapter 2 INTEGRATION OF DATA IN ACCOUNTS TO RESPOND TO POLICY NEEDS

This chapter will emphasize the benefits of integrating data according to accounting rules. It will discuss the linkages of SEEA-Water to the System of National Accounts and the different standardized classifications, such as the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) and the Central Product Classification (CPC). The chapter will present the rationale behind the supply and use tables as well as the different ways in which they can be used to check consistency and used as the basis for informing the different audiences. It will be shown how data becomes information when it is put together in a comprehensive, consistent and comparable framework.

This chapter will include examples of physical and monetary supply and use tables, as well as asset accounts related to water. The examples will show how the different SEEA-Water tables provide guidance and priorities for the data collection process.

Chapter 3 THE DATA COLLECTION AND COMPILATION PROCESSES

This chapter is based on the list of data items of the IRWS. The different sources of data will be discussed as well as the particularities of the data corresponding to different aspects of the natural and economic water cycles. The importance of prioritizing the data items according to each country's water policies will be highlighted.

The methodologies to collect data will be discussed, including the use of water monitoring networks, surveys, censuses and administrative records. How and when estimates should be used is another topic of this chapter. The chapter will also address the issues of data editing, imputation and validation. The chapter will also include a description of any relevant adjustments that are needed for the water accounts. The explanations will be illustrated with several examples and exercises.

Chapter 4 DISSEMINATION OF THE ACCOUNTS AND STATISTICS TO DIFFERENT TARGET AUDIENCES

Different ways to present the information to different audiences will be discussed. The use of tables, diagrams, graphs, and maps will be presented in this chapter. How to address different audiences with different types of messages as well as the transformation of data into indicators will be topics discussed in this chapter. The chapter will provide examples of country practices in the dissemination of water accounts and statistics, as well as the compilation of various types of indicators for policy design and evaluation.

Chapter 5 CLOSING THE LOOP AND MAINTAINING THE PROCESS

This chapter will focus on the importance of establishing a continuous improvement process in the production of the water accounts and statistics, which involves the constant interaction between users and producers of the information, as well as other stakeholders of the process. The chapter will address the issues of quality assurance in the production of water accounts and statistics. Several examples of country practices will be presented.