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Update on UNECE/CES Task Force on Waste Statistics

Developing a framework on waste statistics

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Fifth Meeting of the Expert Group on Environment Statistics, New York, 16-18 May 2018

CES Task Force on Waste Statistics

Developing a waste statistics framework

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Established in February 2017 based on an issue paper drafted by Netherlands and UNECE in cooperation with Armenia, Kazakhstan, Mexico and Ukraine, as well as with Eurostat, OECD and UNSD

Members:

- Bosnia and Herzegovina (Chair), Canada (Vice-Chair), Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Israel, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Moldova, Russian Federation
- Basel Convention Secretariat, Eurostat, OECD, UNEP, UN-Habitat, UNSD
- UNU (Vice-Chair), ISWA, EAWAG, GIZ, University of Leeds
- UNECE provides the Secretariat of the Task Force

Main objective: To develop a conceptual framework on waste statistics and draft a glossary of the most important terms and definitions in waste statistics. Work should be completed by end of 2019.

Why is there the need for a framework?

Growing information demand and weaknesses of data collections

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- Growing information demand, e.g.
  - SDGs
  - Basel Convention
  - UNEP 10-year framework programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production
  - Circular economy initiatives

- Existing weaknesses, e.g.
  - Important waste flows not measured or conceptually not considered (e.g. informal activities)
  - Key terms and definitions are not fully harmonized (e.g. “municipal waste”)
  - Boundary between waste, products and secondary raw materials is not clearly defined;
  - Several waste flows are difficult to measure (e.g. imports and exports of waste)
  - Different ways to measure the amounts of waste
  - No standard international waste classification
  - Often more details needed (e.g. e-waste, textiles waste, food waste,…)

- Issue paper drafted by UNECE and Statistics Netherlands in consultation with Armenia, Kazakhstan, Mexico and Ukraine, as well as with Eurostat, OECD and UNSD

Work plan and work packages

Working phases and WPs /month	III 17	IV 17	V 17	VI 17	VII 17	VIII 17	IX 17	X 17	XI 17	XII 17	I 18	II 18	III 18	IV 18	V 18	VI 18	VII 18	VIII 18	IX 18	X 18	XI 18	XII 18
Phase 1: Start-up phase																						
Work plan			X																			
Main structure for final document			X																			
Identifying WP leaders and members identified for WPs		WP 1-3					WP 4						WP5	WP6								
Phase 2: Implementing work packages																						
WP1: Assessing the fitness for purpose of current waste statistics (Netherlands, UNECE)																						
WP2: Defining scope of waste statistics (Chairs, Secretariat)																						
WP3: Drafting a generic waste flow scheme (Mexico)																						
WP4: Review of key terminology and classifications used in waste-related policies and waste statistics (UNSD)																						
WP 5: Development of the framework on waste statistics (OECD, to be confirmed)																						
WP6: Identification of follow-up work (tbd)																						
Phase 3: From draft to final report																						
Align + collate all draft chapters into the first draft																		Draft report				
Internal review																						
External review																						
Completion, final editing																						Final report

WP 1: Assessing fitness for purpose

Current waste statistics is not fit for many purposes

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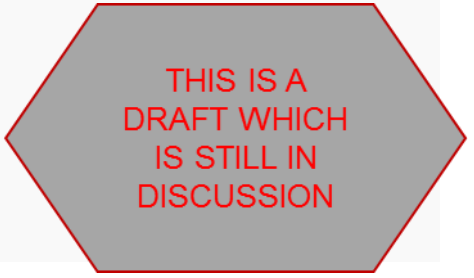
Main problems can be categorized as follows:

1. Practical problems in data collection and production of waste statistics, e.g.
   - Data collection has little priority in some countries
   - Lack of data flows (e.g. from municipal to national level)
   - Coverage: often good data only for major cities available
   - Transforming raw data in accordance with international questionnaires
2. Conceptual and terminological problems
   - Waste statistics do not tell the full story (e.g. informal activities or illegal disposal missing; important waste streams not recorded separately etc.)
   - Lack of clear definitions (e.g. “municipal solid waste”, “recycling”, “reuse”, “recovery”, “waste management”)
   - Unclear scope and boundaries (e.g. how to treat imports and exports of waste? How to deal with the grey area between waste and products?)
   - Lack of an international waste classification
3. New management approaches and policies of growing interest
   - E.g. circular economy



WP 2: Scope of waste statistics

What is waste? What should be within waste statistics?

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What is waste?

- Generally, waste is defined as an ‘end-of-lifecycle’ item from the perspective of the producer of the waste. Waste means any substance or object which the holder discards or intends or is required to discard.
- Conceptually, this includes all types of materials, including radioactive waste, mineral waste, sewage sludge, etc.
- Nationally used waste definitions in many cases differ from this general definition as they may exclude certain materials (e.g. because they are inert or fall under specific policies, such as radioactive wastes or medical wastes).

What should be within waste statistics?

- All wastes generated by source (FDES 3.3.1)
- All possible flows of the generated wastes:
  - Waste managed, including imports and exports of waste (FDES 3.3.2)
  - Waste flows of the informal sector
  - Illegal flows of waste, including waste discarded into the environment
- Waste recovery (and recycling) by the formal and informal sector
- Final disposal wastes (total: including controlled and uncontrolled disposal)
- Statistics on collection, treatment and disposal infrastructure (FDES 3.3.2)

THIS IS A DRAFT WHICH IS STILL IN DISCUSSION

WP 3: Generic waste flow scheme

Defining the "waste system": Flows of waste, resources and products

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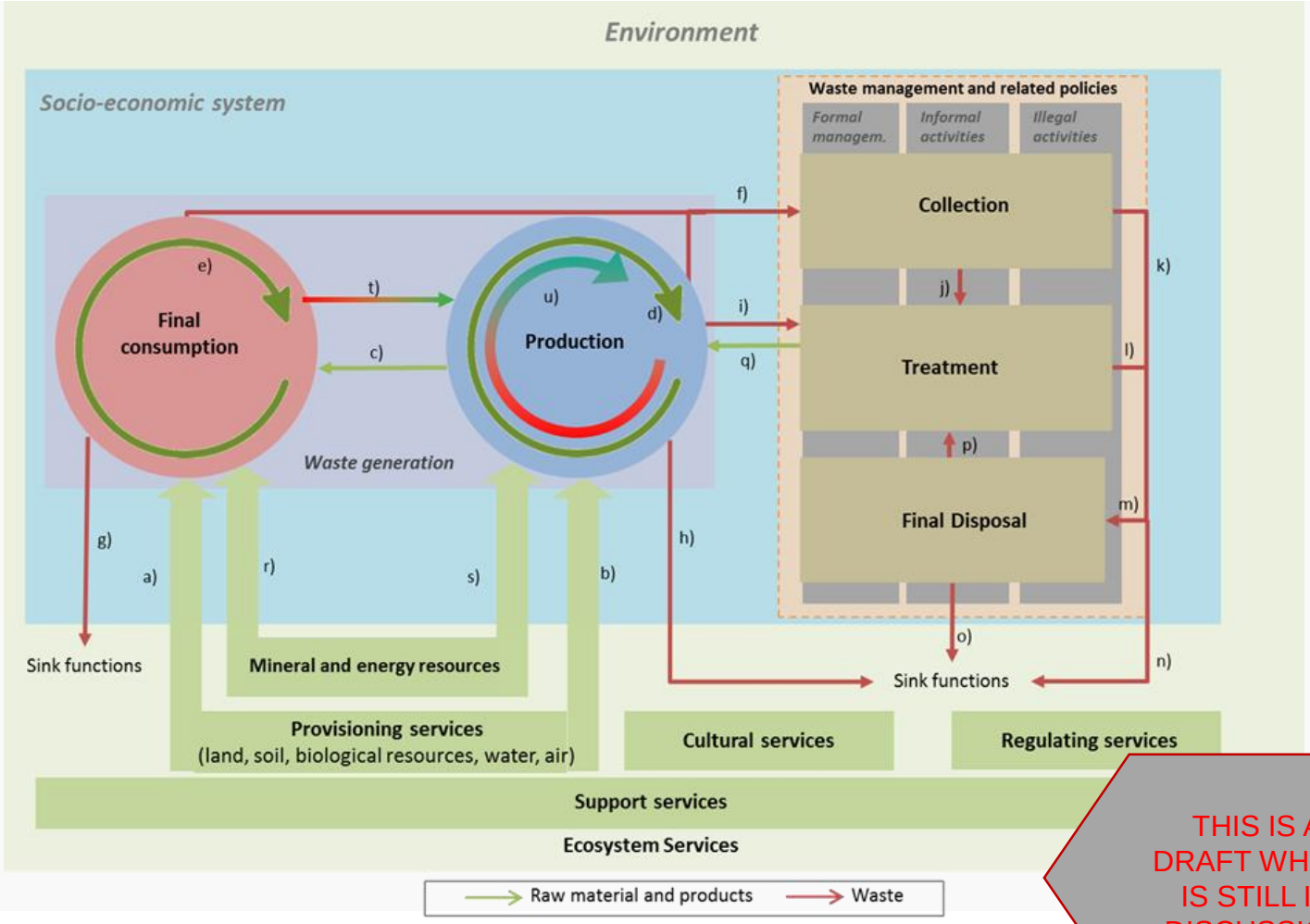
More diagrams will be included in the report, drilling down from the "waste system" to waste statistics. See e.g. scheme used in the FDES methodological sheet



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WP 4: Review of key-terminology and classifications

DRAFT Inventory of key terms has been established

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Status of work:

- Inventory of terms and definitions was populated from UNSD-UNEP Questionnaire, OECD/Eurostat Questionnaire, FDES, Basel Convention, SDG Indicator 11.6.1 (urban solid waste), 12.5.1 (recycling rate) and 12.4.2 (hazardous waste), and the SEEA Central Framework, with initial comments on their alignment.
- Terms have been split into 3 sheets generation, management and composition; and a sheet on circular economy
- For some terms no definitions are available in these sources, e.g. liquid waste, formal waste management, illegal waste-related activities, residual waste and recovery value of waste.

Planned outcome (how this will be discussed in the report):

- Criteria for selection of terms
- Review of currently used terminology and identification of related problems, e.g. terms used as synonyms or similar terms with different definitions
- Review of currently used classifications to describe different concepts of wastes
- Proposal for terms and definitions to be used for the framework
- List of open issues that need to be clarified at a later stage

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WP 5: Development of the Framework

Scope, links with other frameworks and the details of waste statistics

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Integration of WP1-4 into one stand-alone chapter:

- Diagrams and texts defining the scope and details of waste flows
- Statistical classifications (ISIC, waste classifications, etc.)
- Features of waste (e.g. units of measurement)
- Links with FDES and SEEA
- Links with MFA and Circular Economy
- Links with existing international questionnaires and new policy frameworks (e.g. SDGs)
- Etc.

Work will be kicked off now

Thank you very much for your attention!

Michael Nagy

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