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News and Notes

Environment Statistics Section
United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)/DESA

FOCUS: Strengthening Environment Statistics for Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and National Information Needs

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The SDGs will undoubtedly require systematic key environment statistics for the compilation of the expected SDG indicators. About half of the SDG targets will require environment statistics in order to construct the indicators enabling comparable monitoring over time and across space. But as an emerging domain, environment statistics is the weakest pillar of sustainable development with respect to systematic statistics produced at the national level, particularly in developing nations. Countries that invest in the development of national environment statistics according to their own priorities and pace can be better prepared as they will be able to produce statistics and indicators necessary to monitor their progress towards achieving the SDGs from 2015 to 2030. UNSD stands ready to technically assist countries in the path towards the development of environment statistics.

1. The SDGs and Targets

After the completion date of the MDGs in 2015, the SDGs will lead world efforts to foster sustainable development and eradicate poverty until 2030. The SDGs are at the heart of the Post-2015 development agenda guiding efforts of both member States and the United Nations wider system.

At the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro (Rio+20), governments agreed to launch a process to develop a set of SDGs. They requested the establishment of an Open Working Group (OWG) of 30 elected UN Member States to elaborate a proposal for SDGs through an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process open to all stakeholders that convened in New York, and to submit its outcome proposal to the 68th session of the General Assembly (GA) in September 2015. The OWG on SDGs convened its intergovernmental sessions with countries represented by troikas and produced its outcome document known as the Zero Draft of the Sustainable Development Goals, which contains 17 Goals and 169 Targets (without indicators), covering a wide range of topics in an integral and universal way.

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The SDG and targets are contained in the document “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Outcome Document for the UN Summit to Adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Draft for Adoption”. This outcome document was finalized in 31 July 2015 during the last round of intergovernmental negotiations in New York. The document consists of a preamble and an introduction, the SDGs proposal containing goals and targets, a section on means of implementation and global partnership, and a section describing the follow-up and review process (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015>). It is expected that the SDGs will be formally approved in the UN Summit to adopt the post-2015 Development Agenda (25-27 September 2015), which will be convened as a high level plenary meeting of the General Assembly (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/summit>).

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The Post-2015 development agenda

The United Nations is in the process of defining a post-2015 development agenda. This agenda will be launched at a Summit in September 2015, which is the planned date for realizing the MDGs.

The post-2015 development agenda is currently undergoing informal consultations of the UN General Assembly. The President of the General Assembly has appointed two co-facilitators to lead those informal consultations. The process of constructing the new agenda is member State-led, with broad participation from major groups and other civil society stakeholders.

There have been numerous inputs to the agenda, notably a set of SDGs elaborated by the OWG of the GA, the report of an intergovernmental committee of experts on sustainable development financing, GA dialogues on technology facilitation and many others. The GA called upon the Secretary-General to synthesize the full range of inputs and to present a synthesis report before the end of 2014 as a contribution to the intergovernmental negotiations in the lead up to the Summit.

The United Nations has played a facilitating role in the global conversation on the post-2015 development agenda and supported broad consultations. It also has the responsibility of supporting Member States by providing evidence-based inputs, analytical thinking and field experience.

(<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015>)

2. Indicators to monitor progress on the SDGs

The statistical community has been accompanying the process of the SDGs and is currently working on the elaboration of the SDG indicator set. The Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) was convened by the UN Statistical Commission at its 46th session with the mandate of constructing the indicators for monitoring of the goals and targets of the post-2015 development agenda at the global level, and supporting their implementation (<http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/>). UNSD is the secretariat of this IAEG, which convened its first meeting on 1-2 June 2015 in New York (<http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/first-iaeg-sdgs-meeting/>), with the following main objectives: set up the process for the development of the indicator framework; develop a work plan and agree on the way forward; establish the working methods of the group; and discuss technical issues, including the interlinkages across targets and data disaggregation.

A draft list of prioritized indicators for global monitoring was discussed and it is expected that the work of this group will propose a set of suitable SDG indicators to be agreed upon by the UN Statistical Commission by March 2016, and would be adopted thereafter by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

3. Increased demand for environment statistics in the SDGs

Undoubtedly, the environmental pillar is the weakest pillar of sustainable development when it comes to the production of national statistics. Economic and social statistics have been produced for a longer period of time as part of official statistics within national statistical systems. Particularly in developing countries, environment statistics is seen as a newer and emerging domain which is typically endowed with insufficient resources (technical, financial and human) and it is challenged by weak institutional set-up and insufficient inter-institutional coordination.

Concurrently, the demand for environment statistics to produce reports, indicators and other products is ever increasing both at the national and international levels because the environment is ever more present in public policies and development plans. Countries, regions and the global community are aiming to improve environmental quality and curtail pollution, halt biodiversity and ecosystem loss, make sustainable use of natural resources and combat desertification and climate change. These determinations are progressively included in policy targets, programs and national development plans.

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About half of the SDG targets will require environment statistics in order to compile relevant indicators for the environmentally-related targets. These not only cover the goals and targets that are directly related to environment such as those referring to water and sanitation, climate change, sustainable consumption and production, biodiversity and natural resources (both terrestrial and marine), etc., but environment statistics are also embedded in many other goals and targets (for example in sustainable agriculture in Goal 2, in environmental health related targets in Goal 3, sustainable energy in Goal 7, sustainable economic growth in Goals 8 and 9, among others). A side event during the Statistical Commission in March 2015 was held in New York where a correspondence table between the SDGs and their targets with the environment statistics embedded in the FDES 2013 was presented by UNSD and discussed with the audience composed of chief statisticians of national statistical offices, some of whom participated by presenting their developments in the domain of environment statistics at the national level (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/statcom_2015/seminars/environment/default.html).

4. Green Economy and green growth initiatives

Over the last few years, important new initiatives have emerged to redirect the economy towards a green path at different global, regional and national levels.

Environmental data and statistics are also needed to compile a great proportion of green economy and green growth indicators contained in national and international initiatives. These initiatives typically incorporate metrics about resource use efficiencies and intensities, pollution abatement and other key considerations at the heart of green economy prosperity, which makes them consistent with and enablers of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

UNSD is leading a Development Account project to support developing countries measuring their progress towards a green economy. This project has put forward information, training and technical assistance to participating countries in the Asia and Pacific, and in the Latin America and the Caribbean regions. Among the developed tools there is a reference list of green economy indicators that are relevant and feasible for the majority of developing countries interested in monitoring progress towards a green economy. The project is also developing methodological guidance and metadata for these indicators. Analyzing this list, it is clear that it contains a great proportion of indicators that will most likely also be used to monitor the SDGs and targets. More information on the progress, documents and resources of this project is available at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/greeneconomy/Default.aspx?Lg=E>.

5. Investing in environment statistics to monitor national policies and targets, SDGs, and green economy/green growth initiatives

Producing environment statistics for the first time, and/or strengthening the existing initiatives and environment statistics programmes in developing countries is necessary to fulfill the growing demand posed by national and international initiatives. Nationally, environment statistics inform about policies and commitments such as substantiating state of the environment/sustainable development reports and enable compiling national environmental/sustainable development indicator sets. Internationally, they serve to inform internationally agreed goals (notably the SDGs), as well as satisfying reporting needs of multilateral environmental agreements and conventions. A national system of environment statistics will thus be multi-purpose, modular and wide in scope, satisfying different users and purposes for each engaging country.

Countries that put together a multi-purpose national environment statistics system, as opposed to responding in an ad-hoc manner to multiple demands from different users, can make better use of scarce resources and construct national environment statistics capital useful for years to come. A national system of environment statistics is efficient and sustainable in enabling the production of multi-purpose time series describing those elements in the environment that are key and relevant for each country, in a systematic and regular manner. It will better satisfy multiple and new demands from the policy side, including reporting needs, the monitoring of its own policies and impacts of programmes, and properly feed decision making based on evidence about the state of and main trends in the environment and its interlinkages to social and economic aspects of development.

Progressively, the domain of environment statistics is growing strongly around the world. Nevertheless there is still a lot to be done, since environment statistics are still insufficient as their demand is growing faster than their supply, particularly in developing countries that face numerous needs, scarce financial resources and limited technical capacities. There are many institutional, technical and resource constraints that need to be addressed to speed up progress in the emerging field of environment statistics.

In the long run, it is expected that environment statistics will reach the same importance and level of allocated resources as the economic and social domains in official statistics. And in this evolution, the post-2015 sustainable development agenda is both a tremendous opportunity and a great challenge in this endeavour.

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To advance the necessary regular production of environment statistics in countries, the national statistical offices and environmental authorities together with other sectoral authorities and agencies need to work in a cooperative manner, with proper guidance, and progressively allocating a reasonable level of resources. They can do so in a planned and incremental, modular fashion. In concordance with the need to develop means of implementation of the SDGs and their monitoring framework, UNSD stands ready to help countries develop their environment statistics programmes.

With regard to strengthening technical capacities in this domain, the international community counts upon proper technical guidance of the FDES 2013, the recommended methodological document for organizing and producing environment statistics programmes at the national level. The FDES 2013 provides guidance to collect, compile and disseminate environment statistics according to international statistical recommendations, in an inter-institutionally cooperative, modular, flexible and progressive manner. The FDES defines the scope of environment statistics and provides guidelines that were put together by UNSD, working in close collaboration with an Expert Group at the global level, and that underwent a formal global consultation process before being endorsed by the Statistical Commission in 2013. From a technical standpoint, the FDES 2013 is the international statistical recommendation for developing and strengthening the production of environment statistics at the national level, however it can also be used by sub-regional, regional and international agencies. UNSD has been technically supporting many countries, regions and sub-regions in the developing world using the FDES and its associated tools with great appreciation by countries and its practitioners as reported in different issues of ENVSTATS.

The FDES' associated tools include the Basic and Core Sets of Environment Statistics, a Manual for the Basic and Core Sets that provides detailed guidance for statistics compilation by FDES sub-components and topics that is currently being developed, and an Environment Statistics Self-Assessment Tool (ESSAT) that countries can use to evaluate their needs and availability of data and environment statistics by topic and component, as well as identify their most important data partners within the relevant national and sub-national agencies producing and using environment statistics. More information about the FDES and its tools is available in previous editions of this newsletter, and also in UNSD's Environment Statistics Section site: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/default.htm>.

UNSD NEWS:

Second Meeting of the Expert Group on Environment Statistics – Conclusions and Agreed Work Programme for 2015-2016 (New York, 25-27 March 2015)

The Second Meeting of the Expert Group on Environment Statistics (EGES), organized by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), was held in New York from 25 to 27 March 2015. It was attended by 20 experts from countries and organisations and was chaired by Ms. Iva Ritschelova, President of the Czech Statistical Office.

The meeting was organized into three sessions. Session 1: Manual on the Basic Set of Environment Statistics, including draft methodology sheets on water resources; waste; minerals; energy; environmental expenditure; land cover/land use; biodiversity; and natural extreme events and disasters; Session 2: Environment Statistics Self-Assessment Tool (ESSAT); and Session 3: Work Programme of the EGES.

Regarding the Manual on the Basic Set of Environment Statistics, the conclusion was reached that the main target audience would be environmental statisticians and environmental specialists who work in data analysis and reporting. The methodology sheets therefore should focus on the statistical methods to be used in the collection and compilation of environment statistics and should facilitate the promotion of the use of these methods by all providers of environmental data. Methodologies used for producing the data by a primary source that is non-statistical (e.g., hydrometeorological or other monitoring and modelling, laboratory analyses, interpretation of satellite images, etc.) should not be described in detail. The methodology sheets should motivate and facilitate a dialogue between environmental statisticians and other producers of environmental data (e.g., scientists).

The experts welcomed the Environment Statistics Self-Assessment Tool (ESSAT) and considered it a very valuable tool to undertake an assessment of the level of development in environment statistics, to foster inter-institutional collaboration and to develop a strategy for strengthening environment statistics in a country. It was proposed that the NSO take the leading role in the completion of the ESSAT. The experts unanimously agreed that it is imperative that implementation be done collaboratively, as receiving responses from an NSO rather than a Ministry of Environment, or vice-versa, or from another individual source could lead to very different responses. However, experts also expressed that it is not necessarily the case that countries should complete the ESSAT in one instance, but that instead the use of the ESSAT may be focused on limited parts, and that it has a long-run utility. It can be used

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Based upon progress made by experts in the preceding 12-month period, presentations at this meeting, and upon opinions expressed by experts throughout the meeting, it was decided that the Work Programme of the EGES on the methodological sheets will continue in three work streams: (i) revising the existing methodology sheets based on the discussions at the meeting (including their extensions to incorporate additional areas, such as land use, ecosystems, corporate, non-profit institutions and household environment protection and resource management expenditure, and technological disasters); (ii) completing pending assignments by drafting of pending methodology sheets (air quality, crops and livestock, GHG emissions, human settlements); and (iii) developing new methodology sheets on forests and timber resources.

Further information is available at UNSD's website at: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/FDES/fdes_eges2.html.

FDES 2013 is Currently Undergoing Editing and Related Work is Ongoing

The FDES 2013 (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/FDES/FDES%202015+%20supporting%20tools/FDES.pdf>) is currently in the official editing phase and once this process has been completed it will be submitted for copy preparation and printing, and subsequently for translation. Several countries (as outlined in the Focus article of ENVSTATS issue 36) are already implementing the FDES 2013 and this number is continually growing, due to, inter alia, several capacity building efforts by UNSD and other partners.

The Environment Statistics Self-Assessment Tool (ESSAT) is expected to be finalized by UNSD by the end of August 2015 and will be made available on UNSD's website. The ESSAT contains relevant information on environment statistics at the national level consistent with the scope of the FDES. The main objective of the ESSAT is to improve the ability of nations to assess where they stand with respect to the environment statistics in their country. It is also a means for countries to assess their current position and sets a basis from which they may build their capacities to produce environment statistics.

The Manual on the Basic Set of Environment Statistics is currently being coordinated by UNSD with the assistance of experts that are members of the Expert Group on Environment Statistics. This Manual will provide methodological guidance for developing countries with regard to the compilation and collection of environmental data and its transformation into statistics, and will comprise a series of methodology sheets. It will be a practical and detailed guide to each of the Basic Set themes, and include variable definitions, description of sources and data collection, methods of data compilation/processing for environment statistics production, dissemination and other relevant information. Current work is focusing on thirteen methodology sheets: water resources, freshwater quality, waste, energy resources, minerals, land cover/land use, biodiversity, environment protection expenditure, human settlements, forests and timber resources, air quality, crops and livestock, emissions of GHGs, natural extreme events and disasters. The methodological sheets will be disseminated through the webpage of UNSD when available.

Seminar on “Strengthening Environment Statistics for Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals” at the 46th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (New York, 2 March 2015)

UNSD organized this seminar which was received by an audience of almost 100 persons from national statistical offices, international agencies and missions to the United Nations. Ms. Iva Ritschelova, President of the Czech Statistical Office and Chair of the Expert Group on Environment Statistics chaired the seminar and delivered welcoming words concerning the importance of applying the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES) to the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and how the SDGs appear to have a much stronger demand for quality environment statistics than did the Millennium Development Goals. She praised the FDES for serving as a very useful starting point for any country in the world interested in developing its environment statistics.

Ms. Rayén Quiroga of UNSD made an introductory presentation which outlined the state of environment statistics, examples of correspondences between the FDES' Basic Set of Environment Statistics and the SDGs, and showed cases where countries are already using the FDES. Ms. Quiroga illustrated that in terms of monitoring and measurement, although environment remains the weakest of the three pillars concerning sustainable development, the contribution of environment statistics to sustainable development monitoring is of great importance. Updated information on the FDES tools was also provided, including the Environment Statistics Self-Assessment Tool (ESSAT), and the Methodology Sheets for the FDES. Seven of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals were shown to be directly in need of environment statistics, with several other goals also emphasizing sustainability, and other aspects relevant to environment statistics such as agriculture.

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Mr. José Rosero, Executive Director, National Institute of Statistics and Census, Ecuador presented on the process of development of environment statistics in Ecuador. Mr. Rosero spoke of the context and problems for the development of environment statistics in his country, of a proposal to advance environment statistics as well as of the FDES framework to strengthen, guide and coordinate environment statistics. He detailed Ecuador's experience in implementing the FDES and shared with the audience Ecuador's V datos dissemination tool.

Ms. Eszter Horvath, Chief of Environment and Energy Statistics Branch, UNSD on behalf of Mr. Sabir Al Harbi, Director General, Statistical Centre of the Gulf Cooperation Council presented on strengthening environment statistics for monitoring the SDGs. This presentation outlined a plan to implement the FDES within three years, a strategic development initiative, a road map for 2020, and a plan for regular dissemination of environment statistics.

Ms. Anna N. Majelantle, Statistician General, Statistics Botswana presented on the implementation of the FDES: the case of Botswana. Her presentation detailed Botswana's experience using the FDES 1984 as well as the FDES 2013, the production of environment statistics in Botswana and their relationship to the SDG and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting, as well as challenges in implementing the FDES. It also described for which SDGs Botswana intends to use the FDES 2013 to meet its data needs.

Ms. Reena Shah, Chief, Environment Statistics Section, UNSD on behalf of Ms. Li Fa Cheung Kai Suet, Director of Statistics, Statistics Mauritius presented on strengthening environment statistics for monitoring the SDGs. This presentation covered the evolution of environment statistics in Mauritius, the use of first the FDES 1984, and now the FDES 2013, future plans on capacity building and highlighted the importance of aligning environment statistics with the FDES 2013. It also described the availability of environment statistics at the national level in relationship to the Basic Set of Environment Statistics contained in the FDES 2013 and noted the importance of the FDES 2013 as a useful tool in the context of the SDGs.

Mr. Marcus Newbury, UNSD on behalf of Mr. Themba Munalula, Head, Statistics Unit, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) presented on the Roadmap for the implementation of the FDES 2013 for COMESA member states. This presentation illustrated COMESA's assessment of environment statistics in its 19 member states, and COMESA's road map for achieving a consolidated stage of environment statistics where high quality statistical standards are maintained with good coverage and timely dissemination. The presentation also described the main elements regarding the first regional workshop on the implementation of the FDES 2013 organized by UNSD and COMESA that was held in Mauritius from 26-29 January 2015.

All presentations are available on the UNSD website at: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/statcom_2015/seminars/environment/default.html.

The question and answer discussion session revealed the audience's keen interest in the FDES and how it can be applied to measure the SDGs. Discussion was had regarding the importance of data acquired from outside of traditional sources being so necessary for many statistics recommended within the FDES, and for the field of environment statistics in general as they apply to the SDGs.

UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire 2013 on Environment Statistics

The UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire 2013 on Environment Statistics was sent out to 173 countries and territories in April 2014. By December 2014, 86 countries/territories responded, with 81 countries submitting data and five countries with no data available. Each region's response rate varied significantly. The best response rates were found in East Europe (78.6%), followed by the Americas (57.1%) and Asia (51.1%). The response rate for Africa was 38.1% and there was no data response from Oceania. Among the 81 countries submitting data, 71 countries were able to provide data for both the water and waste sections of the questionnaire, while 11 countries provided data for only one of the two sections.

All questionnaire responses have been through a thorough data validation process. Selected water and waste statistics with relatively good quality and geographic coverage compiled from the questionnaire, complemented by data from OECD and Eurostat, will be published by UNSD through the UNSD Environmental Indicators webpage (<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/qindicators.htm>) and the Country Snapshots webpage (https://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/Questionnaires/country_snapshots.htm). The complete data and footnotes received from each respondent country will be uploaded to the Country Files webpage (<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/Questionnaires/index.asp>) with password protection. Country files are available, by request, for national, regional and international organizations that are involved in the collection of environment statistics. Also, selected water and waste statistics will be updated on UNData (<http://data.un.org>).

UNSD appreciates countries' continuing support on the improvement of timely and reliable global environment statistics. Additional information, including the questionnaires and guidance materials, will be uploaded to the website as they become available. If you have any questions or comments, please send them to: envstats@un.org. The next biennial UNSD/UNEP environment data collection will take place in 2016.

Side Event during the Post-2015 Intergovernmental Negotiations on how Geospatial Information Contributes to Achieving the SDGs (New York, 22 April 2015)

UNSD, through the UN-GGIM Secretariat, co-organised and convened a side event with the Permanent Mission of Denmark, UN-GGIM: Europe, and the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) on 22 April 2015 during the Post-2015 Intergovernmental Negotiations. Titled, “Unleashing the Power of ‘Where’ to Make the World a Better Place: How Geographic Information Contributes to Achieving the SDGs” the side event was introduced by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Denmark with an informative short video ‘Everything Happens Somewhere’ (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mkge03NJhfU&feature=youtu.be>) and then featured influential presentations by experts from Indonesia, Jamaica and the United States. Through specific examples and case studies, these speakers emphasised and demonstrated the importance of geospatial information and earth observations in measuring and monitoring the implementation of the SDGs consistently over space and time and provided the more than 90 participants with important information on why geographic location is a core source of information for providing content and context to understand natural and human systems, and contributes to evidence-based policy decisions.

The Environment Statistics Section was extremely interested in the studies done on specific examples such as: Percentage of agricultural area under sustainable agricultural practices; Population in urban areas exposed to outdoor air pollution levels above WHO guideline values; Percentage of population using safely managed drinking water services; Change in water use efficiency over time for major sectors, including energy, industry, agriculture, and drinking water supply; Efficient land use; Number of people affected by hazardous events; and Percentage of urban solid waste regularly collected and well managed, to name a few which are relevant to our main environment indicators.

Supporting the Implementation of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) (Calodyne, Mauritius, 26-29 January 2015)

UNSD organized a sub-regional workshop for the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) countries, entitled “Environment Statistics in Support of the Implementation of the FDES 2013”, in collaboration with the COMESA Secretariat. It took place in Calodyne, Mauritius from 26 to 29 January 2015, with hosting and on-ground support provided by UNDP and Statistics Mauritius. Several other international and inter-governmental organizations participated in the Workshop, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC).

The Workshop follows the United Nations Statistical Commission’s endorsement in 2013 of the revised FDES 2013 as the framework for strengthening environment statistics programmes in countries. Two staff members of UNSD served as overall resource persons and made presentations on the FDES 2013 and related subjects.

The Workshop was very well received by the participants who found it extremely useful in providing them with guidance towards the implementation of the FDES 2013 in their countries. The participants look forward to using the Environment Statistics Self-Assessment Tool (ESSAT) in their countries and to receiving further methodological guidance to establish or strengthen their work programmes in environment statistics. They also noted that the implementation of the FDES 2013 will help countries address the increasing demand for integrated information in support of integrated policies in the follow-up to Rio+20 and the Post-2015 Development Agenda through the strengthening of environmental statistics and indicators. Representatives of the Statistics Unit of COMESA presented their Road Map which includes a plan to assist their member states further with the implementation of the FDES 2013, in close collaboration with UNSD.

Since the completion of this workshop, COMESA has shared with UNSD its mapping of the FDES to COMESA treaty provisions and how this links to COMESA’s statistics strategy of implementing the FDES in member states.

More information on this Workshop is available at: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/unsd_MauritiusWorkshop.htm.

Development Account Project on “Supporting Member States in Developing and Strengthening Environment Statistics and Integrated Environmental-Economic Accounting for Improved Monitoring of Sustainable Development”

This Development Account Project notes that in light of the importance of high quality statistics and their effective use in supporting evidence-based policy making and monitoring the achievement of internationally agreed goals, it is necessary to improve the availability and quality of environment statistics and environmental-economic accounts. The overall objective of the Project is to strengthen national capacities of developing countries for the sustained, regular production of a priority set of environment statistics, and environmental-economic accounts and supporting statistics, and the resulting indicators in order to measure progress towards sustainable development.

The Project consists of two complementary modules, Module A on environment statistics and Module B on environmental-economic accounts. Module A of the Project focuses on strengthening environment statistics in the East African Community (EAC) Secretariat and its five member states. Module A of the Project focuses on advancing the statistical and institutional capacity for the collection, compilation and dissemination of environment statistics needed for environmental reporting, indicator-based assessment and environmental-economic accounting, based on national policies and priorities, using the FDES and the Basic/Core Set of Environment Statistics. It includes the organisation of a sub-regional capacity building workshop to initiate the Project, using the FDES and the Basic Set of Environment Statistics to train the practitioners to develop or strengthen statistical and institutional capacities in environment statistics at the national level.

To this end, UNSD organized a sub-regional workshop for the EAC countries, entitled “Environment Statistics in support of the Implementation of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013)”, in collaboration with the EAC Secretariat. It took place in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania from 6 to 10 July 2015, with hosting and on-ground support provided by the EAC Secretariat and the National Bureau of Statistics of the United Republic of Tanzania. Several other international and inter-governmental organizations participated in the Workshop, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

The Workshop was much appreciated by the participants who found it very practical in providing them with guidance towards the implementation of the FDES 2013 in their countries. Two staff members of the Environment Statistics Section of UNSD served as overall resource persons and made presentations on the FDES 2013 and related subjects, which included information on how the FDES can help countries compile environmentally-related SDG indicators. The participants look forward to implementing the Environment Statistics Self-Assessment Tool (ESSAT) in their respective countries and to receiving further methodological guidance contained in the Manual for the Basic Set of Environment Statistics which is currently being developed. They also noted that the implementation of the FDES 2013 will help them address the increasing demand for integrated information in support of integrated policies in the follow-up to Rio+20 and the Post-2015 Development Agenda through the strengthening of environmental statistics and indicators, in particular in relation to the Sustainable Development Goal indicators. The Workshop content was very relevant to the SDGs since many of the environment statistics discussed and analysed are necessary for the measurement of countries’ progress toward achieving the Goals. The Workshop also discussed and adopted a key set of recommendations and actions on the way forward in developing a regional programme on environment statistics for the EAC Secretariat and its EAC member states, including the implementation of the FDES 2013.

More information on this Workshop is available at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/EAC.html>.

Several future activities under Module A of the Project are envisioned such as the application of the Environment Statistics Self-Assessment Tool (ESSAT) based on the Basic Set of Environment Statistics in the five participating EAC countries, technical assistance by UNSD to the five countries to strengthen their production of selected environment statistics series and/or indicators, as well as another sub-regional workshop to share progress and lessons learned.

News on the UNSD Development Account Project on “Supporting Developing Countries Measure Progress Towards Achieving a Green Economy”

The Development Account project is organized in several phases that are being carried out during 2014-2015 (see articles in ENVSTATS issues 35 and 36). The project is now well underway and on track with its programme of work. During the first quarter of 2015, the project finalized its assessment phase and moved forward into implementing the capacity building phase. This phase consists of training workshops for all participating countries and eight technical assistance missions to the pilot countries, which will be carried out during 2015.

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1. Resources and tools developed by the project

Project website

A dedicated project website was set up with all relevant documents and resources for participating countries and partners, as well as other interested parties. The website is a good place to look for information, track project progress and take advantage of the resources and tools produced. It contains all produced resources and background documents including the proposed reference Green Economy Indicator list with metadata references (project documents), the documents containing relevant indicator lists considered (library), and all presentations and documents discussed during the regional workshops (meetings). The English/Spanish website of the project is available at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/greeneconomy>.

Reference list of Green Economy Indicators for developing countries

An important tool produced by the project is a list of indicators that can inform on green economy issues and which is suitable for developing countries. This reference list of indicators underwent several rounds of discussion among project staff, consultants, participating countries and partner institutions. The process of putting together this list was important to reach agreement on the indicators in the list, and ensure that they are suitable for developing countries and that definitions conform to international concepts and methodologies. The list now contains 97 indicators, grouped in five major themes, namely: 1. Economic, demographic and social context for sustainable development, 2. Environmental and resource productivity, 3. Natural asset base, 4. Environmental dimension of quality of life, and 5. Policy responses and economic opportunities. The indicators in the list are divided into a core set of 44 indicators and a non-core set of 53 indicators. This distinction allows countries to select and supplement the indicators they need according to their priorities and level of development of the corresponding underlying basic statistics at the national level. The list is also available in Spanish.

Green Economy Indicators assessment tool

An assessment tool consisting of a multi-stage questionnaire has been developed and piloted in combination with the draft list of indicators. This assessment tool includes a general module covering information on the institutional setup in the country, existing data collections related to green economy indicators and areas of statistics where countries still need technical assistance. This section of the tool was also used by pilot countries of the project to identify key areas of concern that need to be addressed in the second phase of the project activities which consist of training and direct technical assistance. The assessment tool also includes a specific module that directly addresses the availability of the underlying basic statistics for each indicator in the list. This specific module allows countries to pinpoint the areas that lack in statistical availability or that present issues with regard to the quality of existing statistics produced, including the identification of the causes. This tool is also available in Spanish.

2. Asia / Pacific Regional Workshop

In addition to the regional workshop organized in the first phase of the project for Latin America and the Caribbean (Santiago, December 2014, see ENVSTATS issue 36), a similar regional workshop was conducted for Asia / Pacific countries in Bangkok, Thailand, on 20-23 January 2015. This workshop gathered more than 50 participants from 14 countries and several regional and international organizations (UNEP – both global and regional office for the Asia Pacific region, CSIRO, APEC EGEDA, FAO – regional office for Asia Pacific).

This workshop served the objectives of: a) introducing participants to the concepts of green economy and related concepts and frameworks; b) introducing participants to underlying statistical frameworks and data requirements; c) presenting the project documents (list of indicators, assessment tool) and discussing their potential improvements and adaptation to country needs; and d) introducing the latest statistical recommendations and frameworks relevant for the production of basic statistics needed to produce green economy indicators.

The workshop included presentations and subsequent discussions regarding the findings of the pilot countries' assessments, which were conducted previously. Non-pilot countries also reported on their situation and priorities. Deliberations covered the current status of the statistics needed to compile green economy indicators at the national level in all participating countries. This information was helpful to produce a first list of regional statistical topics that need to be addressed in the capacity building phase of the project. This list of topics was subsequently refined and consulted with countries and partners to set up the agenda for the regional training workshops and direct technical assistance missions to countries in the second phase of the project.

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The documents and presentations discussed during this workshop are available at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/greeneconomy/MeetingDocuments.aspx?Lg=E&id=2>.

Altogether, the two regional workshops in Asia / Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean gathered a total of 97 participants from the participating countries. Apart from UNSD staff and country participants, staff members of the Regional Commissions (ECLAC and ESCAP), of the international and regional offices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), of the Latin American Energy Organization (OLADE) and the Expert Group on Energy Data Analysis of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC-EGEDA) participated in the workshops.

The two regional workshops finalized the first phase of the project and prepared the work for the next phase consisting of training and direct technical assistance, which was started with two regional training workshops.

3. Regional Training Workshops

Training Workshop on Green Economy Indicators for Latin American and Caribbean countries, Lima, Peru, 21-24 April 2015

This workshop was jointly organised by UNSD, the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics of Peru (INEI) and the Ministry of the Environment of Peru. It brought together 54 participants from 13 Latin American and Caribbean countries, namely the four project pilot countries in this region: Chile, Ecuador, Peru and Colombia, as well as representatives from non-pilot countries. In total, the workshop was conducted by six trainers from three organizations: DESA/UNSD, ECLAC and OLADE.

The objective of the workshop was to train participants in the project on the statistical fundamentals of selected green economy indicators and its underlying statistics, including concepts, internationally accepted definitions, methodologies and data collection and compilation processes, with the overall goal of strengthening national statistical capacities to produce and sustain these indicators. The workshop covered the main thematic areas underlying green economy indicators, namely the environment, agriculture and energy statistics and new themes in green economy, such as environmental goods and services and green jobs.

The training workshop brought together practitioners from different national agencies of participating countries that carry out work related to green economy – including producers of basic statistics, producers of green economy indicators and users of such indicators.

UNSD steered the sessions and delivered most presentations, with ECLAC and OLADE making specialized presentations and conducting discussions with participants. Participants from Brazil, Chile and Colombia also presented their countries' progress in producing green economy indicators, providing illustrative examples of their work in related areas. The presentations and subsequent discussions were well received by participants that showed high interest and engagement in all sessions.

The documents and presentations discussed during this workshop are available at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/greeneconomy/MeetingDocuments.aspx?id=3>.

Training Workshop on Green Economy Indicators for countries in the Asia and Pacific region, Hanoi, Viet Nam, 5-8 May 2015

This workshop brought together 32 participants from 12 Asian countries (with the pilot countries Bhutan, Malaysia, Mongolia and Vietnam among them) and trainers from DESA/UNSD and APEC. Participants included practitioners from different national agencies of participating countries that carry out work related to green economy – including producers of basic statistics, producers of green economy indicators and users of such indicators.

Similar to the Latin America and Caribbean workshop, the objective of this Asia Pacific workshop was to train participants in the project on the statistical fundamentals of selected green economy indicators and its underlying statistics, including concepts, internationally accepted definitions, methodologies and data collection and compilation processes, with the overall goal of strengthening national statistical capacities to produce and sustain these indicators.

Key elements of the workshop covered the main thematic areas underlying green economy indicators, namely the environment, agriculture and energy statistics and new themes in green economy (such as environmental goods and services, green jobs). The contents of each of the thematic sessions covered: a) a general introduction to the theme; b) main frameworks and international recommendations covering these fields; c) internationally agreed definitions and metadata for selected statistics underlying green economy indicators; and d) detailed description and compilation methods for those selected indicators. The indicators analysed in detail were prioritized by the countries during the previous regional workshop from the reference list of green economy indicators for developing countries.

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UNSD coordinated the sessions and delivered most presentations. Participants from APEC and Korea also presented the progress in producing green economy indicators in their institutions, providing illustrative and detailed examples of this work. The presentations and subsequent discussions were well received by participants that showed high interest and were engaging in all sessions.

The documents and presentations discussed during this workshop are available at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/greeneconomy/MeetingDocuments.aspx?id=4>.

4. Technical assistance missions to pilot countries

Country missions to provide direct technical assistance to the eight pilot countries are planned for the 2nd – 4th quarter of 2015.

The first mission in this phase was a two-week direct technical assistance mission to Viet Nam in May 2015. This mission was focused on practical issues of data collection and processing with agencies involved in green economy indicator production in the country, including the General Statistics Office of Viet Nam, the Ministry of Planning and Investment, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

The second mission was conducted to Mongolia in June 2015 and it was focused on similar goals as the first.

The next technical assistance missions were scheduled for Bhutan and Malaysia in July and August. The technical assistance missions to the four Latin American countries are scheduled for the 3rd and 4th quarter of 2015.

More information on these activities will be provided in the next issue of ENVSTATS.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS:

FAO NEWS

Progress on SEEA-Agriculture

(Contributed by Francesco N. Tubiello and Silvia Cerilli, FAO)

The development of a *System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries* (SEEA-Agriculture) is led by FAO and UNSD in collaboration with all relevant international and national agencies. It integrates data domains of importance to agriculture, forestry and fisheries, into dedicated data tables and combined presentations for the measurement of meaningful, coherent and comparable agri-environmental indicators. Recent progress on SEEA-Agriculture, including results of testing with national experts in Indonesia, Guatemala, Australia and Canada, a timeline for a second global consultation in late 2015, and plans for submission to the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2016, was presented at the recent UNCEEA meeting (New York, 24-26 June 2015) (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/ceea/meetings/tenth_meeting/Paper8.pdf).

Current work at FAO on SEEA-Agriculture includes the introduction of methodological 'Tiers', allowing member countries, irrespective of their level of statistical capacity, to fill as a default a set of basic SEEA-Agriculture tables using national agricultural, forestry, and fishery statistics already available through international databases, including FAOSTAT. This phased approach allows for identification of national data gaps and facilitates planning of capacity development needs. Importantly, it allows for the implementation by countries of a first set of robust environmental-economic analyses on food and agriculture that are internationally comparable and transparent.

ESCWA NEWS

(Contributed by Ms. Wafa Aboul Hosn, UNESCWA)

Publications in ESCWA

The Statistics Division in ESCWA published “*Measuring Sustainable Development in the Arab Region: A Review of Country Experiences and Recommendations for Monitoring and Evaluation in the Post-2015 Era*” for the Second Session of the Arab High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development from 5 to 7 May 2015, Kingdom of Bahrain. The report provides a concise assessment of sustainable development monitoring and evaluation in the Arab region and a discussion of the implications for the Arab region of the “post-2015 agenda”. It makes recommendations intended to identify actions required in the region to prepare it to effectively undertake development monitoring and evaluation in the post-2015 era. The report is available at: <http://css.escwa.org.lb/SDPD/3572/7-Statistics.pdf>. All the documents of the meeting are found on the meeting website: <http://www.escwa.un.org/information/meetingdetails.asp?referenceNum=3572E>.

The Statistics Division in ESCWA also prepared the “*COMPENDIUM OF ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS IN THE ARAB REGION 2014-2015*.” In this issue of the compendium, data for Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia are available for the first time in the Compendium of Environment Statistics after their request to join the Commission was approved in September 2012. This issue includes seven chapters: (i) freshwater resources; (ii) fisheries; (iii) biodiversity; (iv) air pollution and climate change; (v) energy consumption; (vi) waste management; and (vii) Goal 7 of the MDGs. In this issue also, the chapter (iv) on climate change was expanded with more detailed data on CO2 emissions by sector and index calculation for emissions. ESCWA used national sources mainly data gathered from the national statistical offices and related ministries of each ESCWA member country, some international agencies, and the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire 2013 on Environment Statistics for the Freshwater Resources and the Waste Management chapters (chapter 1 and chapter 6). The Compendium is reviewed by peers and by the Publication Committee in ESCWA. It will be available at the Statistics Portal: <http://www.escwa.un.org/divisions/sd/pubs/default.asp>.

Developing Energy and Environment Statistics in the Cooperation Council for the Arab Countries of the Gulf (GCC) Region

(Contributed by Abdelaziz Bourahla, Energy and Environment Expert, GCC-STAT)

The Statistical Centre for the Cooperation Council for the Arab Countries of the Gulf (“GCC Stat”) was incepted in June 2012 to serve as a common official pool of statistics and data for the member states of the Cooperation Council for the Arab Countries of the Gulf (GCC).

The GCC Stat was approved by the GCC Ministerial Council in September 2011 and its Charter was officially endorsed in December 2012 by the GCC Supreme Council, comprising of heads of member states: United Arab Emirates, Kingdom of Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sultanate of Oman, State of Qatar and State of Kuwait.

The Centre is empowered to be the only official source of data for the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and it is located in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.

The statistics function of the GCC-Stat is centralized in four divisions:

1. Economic Statistics
2. Demography & Social Statistics
3. Research & Development Indicators
4. Geographical, Environmental, Tourism & Energy Statistics

The importance of the energy and environment sectors in the GCC region is acknowledged by a multitude of regional and international cooperation programs such as the GCC Energy policies and the interconnection project, the Energy conservation initiative, the UE-GCC joint action program "Sharaka", the GCC Environment protection program, which stresses the need to strengthen cooperation and intensify dialogue in the field of energy and environment policies for the region as well as to create the necessary conditions to foster interconnections and investment. For this, in the GCC-Stat mandate, energy and environment constitute one of the ten priority statistical fields which should be reinforced and where activities should be concentrated. Therefore, one of the conclusions of the Board Directors meeting held in Muscat in January 2014 was to adopt the project document for the development of energy and environment statistics in the GCC region and its work program for 2014. This permitted the launch of the first activity to assess national statistical systems through an international consultancy in order to carry out “Current Status Surveys”.

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The GCC-Stat strategic objectives aim at:

Building and strengthening the statistical and institutional capacity of the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council to meet the statistical requirements at GCC level, in particular and international level, in general.

- Building and strengthening the statistical and institutional capacity of the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council to meet the statistical requirements at GCC level, in particular and international level, in general.
- Promoting and improving the quality and quantity of statistical products on a sustainable basis.
- Projecting the GCC region as a unified economic and social agglomeration.
- Developing, expanding and marketing statistical dissemination.
- Establishing joint work programs between the National Statistics Centers and GCC-Stat.
- Unifying the national statistics strategies in the GCC countries with the joint statistics programs in accordance with the best international practices.
- Building the culture of statistics and raising the awareness about statistics and strengthening the actual and correct use of data and information in decision making and policy formulation in GCC countries.
- Ensuring that the GCC region has an effective presence in international statistical development.
- Ensuring the long-term organisational sustainability of GCC-Stat.

More specifically ...

The energy and environment component within the GCC-Stat program will in particular improve the sustainable capacity of the six GCC countries to produce and publish comprehensive, reliable, timely, relevant energy and environment statistics to ensure a certain level of harmonization of statistical methods with regional and international requirements in this area and to answer users' needs.

The methodological approach addresses several fundamental issues linked to:

- Strengthening institutional and inter-institutional relationships between GCC sector partners.
- Ensuring data exchange between GCC Countries and GCC-Stat.
- Promoting harmonized national statistics compliant with UN and international standards.
- Giving more visibility to the partnership outputs.

The expected results are:

- Methodological harmonization
- Production of harmonized statistics
- Data collection process strengthened and adapted to specific needs
- Regional database regularly updated
- Network of energy statisticians enlarged and strengthened
- Synergies with other programmes promoted
- Energy and environment statistics made visible
- Users' needs taken into account.

Proposed work plan for energy and environment sectors

The activities planned under the energy and environment statistics project will be executed keeping in mind the overall consistency of GCC-Stat program. The following are the phases defined for the implementation of the program:

- Inception phase: Dedicated mainly to the assessment of the national statistical system, the selection of initial datasets and the mobilisation of existing data and metadata.
- Implementation phase: Focus on two main priority areas per theme.

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	Short term period (2015)	Medium term period (2016-2017)	Long term phase (2018-...)
Capacity building	On two main areas: Energy Balance Water Harmonised GIS platform?	Final Energy Consumption Surveys Waste statistics SEEA Water & Energy	Energy Efficiency Indicators Sustainable Development Indicators Air Emissions statistics SEEA Air
Data quality quantity improvement	Data collection based on initial dataset ISIC implementation for industry sector Survey plan: FEC Environment	Data collection using improved dataset ISIC implementation for other sectors Survey preparation and implementation: FEC - Industry or Households sector Waste survey	Data collection using improved dataset Survey preparation and implementation: FEC - Households sector Biodiversity
Improvement of dissemination of statistics	Regional yearly book	Energy Balance Publication at R&N levels Water statistics publication GCC-Stat website	Energy Balance Publication at R&N levels Water and Waste statistics publication GCC-Stat website
Coordination at national and regional levels	TF & WG at national and regional levels	TF & WG at national and regional levels	TF & WG at national and regional levels
Contribution to adoption of UN and international standards	SIEC ISIC IRES FDES IRWS SEEA	SIEC ISIC IRES FDES IRWS SEEA	SIEC ISIC IRES FDES IRWS SEEA
Awareness and user's needs	Participation to Task force (TF) Survey at regional level	Survey at Regional and National Levels Conference	Survey at Regional and National Levels Conference
Synergy	UNSD, EUROSTAT	UNSD, EUROSTAT RCREEE, UN-ESCWA	UNSD, EUROSTAT RCREEE, UN-ESCWA
Management and sustainability	TF, WG, Monthly and half-yearly reports	TF, WG, Monthly and half-yearly reports	TF, WG, Monthly and half-yearly reports

The Need to Train Environment Statistics at Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre (EASTC) Tanzania in Support of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013)

(Contributed by Mr. Godfrey Saga and Dr. C. Kassala, EASTC)

Introduction

The Eastern Africa Statistical Training Centre (EASTC) is the only official statistics training institution which caters for the Sub-Saharan Anglophone Africa. For that reason, its professional statistical orientation is official statistics.

Official statistics is statistics whose essence is best captured by this quotation from the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) *Newsletter* of 2006:

“... selection, compilation, presentation and release of statistics should reflect the public interest and deliver trustworthy statistics that allow us to assess the state of the nation and judge the performance of government”.

There is no doubt that the state of a nation and the performance of its government cannot be separated from the environment in which they operate. Therefore official statisticians are required to help governments make decisions and plan environmental programmes for development with figures. This is the rationale for EASTC to teach environment statistics.

Environment statistics is an emerging statistical field that facilitates evidence based policies and decision making to support sustainable development. As a science, *environment statistics* describes the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the state of the environment and its interaction with human activities and natural events by integrating data from a multitude of different subject areas and sources. (Source: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/envpdf/Brochures/BrochureEnvironment.pdf>).

Why EASTC trains environment statisticians

Currently there is lack of professionals in the field of environment statistics who have academic qualifications to be able to deal with environment challenges quantitatively and policywise, in order to make informed decisions for sustainable development. EASTC realized this gap and therefore came up with a programme of environment statistics to provide a resourceful input for the implementation of the Framework for Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013).

The teaching of environment statistics at EASTC follows the Competence-Based Education and Training (CBET), which involves a set of learning tasks which the learner performs one after the other and the trainer makes sure that each of the tasks is completed. The course is structured to be interactive and the emphasis is on learning by doing. The learning context of the course is based on classroom lectures, guided independent works, practical demonstration, case study, practical assignments and tests as part of continuous assessment.

What EASTC teaches in environment statistics

Environment statistics is taught at Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree levels.

In the Bachelor's Degree programme, students are taught the following modules:

- Environmental statistics from different sectors
- Environmental statistics to determine environmental situations
- Environmental issues and human development
- Environmental problems
- Environmental policies for sustainable environment.

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In the Master's Degree programme students are taught the following modules:

- Environment statistics
- Environment statistics for assessing socio-economic aspects of a society
- Statistical methods for producing statistics of environmental issues in a society
- Relevant statistics for assessing the status and impact of environmental issues in a society

How EASTC teaches environment statistics

As already pointed out, the training methodology at EASTC is CBET. This teaching/learning approach involves a number of learning tasks module by module. For example, in the Bachelor's module '*Compilation of Environmental Statistics*' the following are the respective learning tasks:

1. Describing concepts related to environmental statistics
2. Identifying classification of environment resources according to international standards (if any)
3. Identifying data needed for environmental statistics (e.g., waste, land and agriculture, forests, air and climate, energy and minerals marine and coastal areas, etc.)
4. Identifying sources of environmental statistics
5. Developing tools and/or acquiring relevant equipment for collecting data
6. Using tools and/acquired equipment to collect data
7. Using accepted standards and practices to compile environmental statistics

As for the Master's level, the respective learning tasks for the module '*Statistical Methods in Producing Statistics of Environmental Issues in a Society*' involves:

1. Describing the system of producing environment statistics
2. Explaining challenges for monitoring and evaluating environment issues of a society in developing countries
3. Using a system of collecting, compiling, disseminating different statistics related to environment issues

Purpose for teaching environment statistics

The overall purpose for teaching environment statistics at the Bachelor's Degree's level is:

“To produce graduates who can work independently in all fields of environment statistics without professional supervision”.

As for the Master's Degree programme, it is designed in such a way that EASTC produces competent, responsible and innovative strategic statistical professionals who will work as managers at senior levels of decision making at national statistical offices, government departments and/or international organizations within the framework of environment statistics.

The future plans for training environment statisticians:

To fully realize the requirements of FDES 2013, EASTC intends to integrate its CBET philosophy with professionalism in its curriculum of environment statistics by incorporating FDES 2013 into environment statistics modules.

EASTC's recent participation in the Workshop on Environment Statistics in support of the implementation of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) that was held in Arusha, Tanzania from 6 to 10 July 2015, and in further related activities will assist in further improving or enhancing the courses currently being offered at EASTC in environment statistics.

For further information please visit: <http://www.eastc.ac.tz/>.

UNECE NEWS

(Contributed by Tiina Luige, Michael Nagy, Anu Peltola and Lukasz Wyrowski)

Conference of European Statisticians Adopts a Declaration on the Role of National Statistical Offices in Measuring and Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals

The Conference of European Statisticians (CES) devoted one full day at its annual plenary session (Geneva, 15-17 June 2015) to considering the response of official statisticians to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The discussion was organised by Switzerland, France and Sweden. It focused on the role of the national statistical offices (NSOs) in the global SDG monitoring, and how NSOs can prepare themselves to meet the high expectations to deliver data for monitoring SDGs. The Conference agreed that NSOs need to play a central role in coordinating the production of data on sustainable development. By using the *CES Recommendations for Measuring Sustainable Development*, NSOs can ensure consistency in the monitoring at national level and improve comparability at regional and international levels. The SDG reporting will present a huge challenge for all statistical offices as providers of data but also as the coordinator of different statistical producers to ensure the quality of data. The Conference also discussed the role of international statistical organizations in coordinating global and regional monitoring and review mechanisms.

The Conference adopted a ***Declaration on the role of national statistical offices in measuring and monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals***. The Declaration acknowledges official statistics as a crucial element in the SDG information system and highlights the role of NSOs as providers of high-quality information to support informed decision-making. All this requires work and investment in statistics. As next steps the Conference decided to:

- **Prepare a road map for the development of official statistics for SDG monitoring** in the UNECE region, touching upon issues such as the setup of monitoring SDGs, new areas of statistics where harmonised indicators need to be developed, how to deal with the required disaggregations of data, communication, capacity building, etc.
- **Adjust the *CES Recommendations for measuring sustainable development*** (http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/publications/2013/CES_SD_web.pdf) **to take into account the SDGs, targets and indicators**. This will offer all countries a useful toolkit for measuring SDGs in an internationally comparable way.

Seminar on the SEEA Implementation and Training Course for Energy Accounts in October 2015

UNECE and OECD will organise a joint Seminar on SEEA implementation on 14-15 October 2015 in Geneva, Switzerland. The main objective of the seminar is to share experience and knowledge on the implementation of SEEA and its use for various policy needs. Furthermore, the seminar will provide a forum to present and discuss the activities of international organisations related to the implementation of SEEA, and contribute to their coordination. The seminar is expected to conclude with recommendations for possible follow-up actions to facilitate SEEA implementation in ECE countries.

The target audience of the seminar is primarily producers of environmental-economic accounts, in particular the managers of environmental-economic account programmes from National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and related agencies.

More information about the seminar and the link for the online registration can be found on UNECE's meeting website <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=37910#/>. English - Russian interpretation will be provided.

Another important SEEA-related activity is the Training Course on SEEA-CF Energy Accounts which will be held from 20-22 October 2015 in Minsk, Belarus. This course is organised by Statistics Norway and EFTA in collaboration with UNECE and hosted by the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus (Belstat). The main objective is to gain hands-on experience by making accounts using own country data. Uses of the accounts data for analysis and indicators will also be presented.

The target audience is experts working with energy statistics and experts working with supply and use tables (SUTs) from National Accounts in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and Mongolia. Course languages will be English and Russian (interpretation will be provided).

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Expert Forum for Producers and Users of Climate-Change Related Statistics (2-3 September 2015 in Geneva)

UNECE will organize an Expert Forum for producers and users of climate change-related statistics on 2-3 September 2015 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Expert Forum will convene at a time when countries are preparing to meet the challenges arising from the Paris Climate Conference, the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and the Sustainable Development Goals, targets and indicators. The meeting will discuss the resulting data needs that relate to climate change, and consider how data producers can best respond to the information needs.

The discussions will follow up on the issues identified in the Recommendations on Climate Change-Related Statistics, endorsed by more than 60 countries and international organisations in April 2014 at the Conference of European Statisticians. The Conference noted that an Expert Forum would be highly useful for sharing ideas and experience, discussing concepts and measurement issues and identifying areas for development. English - Russian interpretation will be provided during the meeting.

Launching of a Task Force on Measuring Extreme Events and Disasters

The work of the Task Force on Measuring Extreme Events and Disasters has been launched in the beginning of June 2015. It is foreseen that the work will be completed by June 2017. The main objective of the Task Force is to clarify the role of official statistics in providing data related to extreme events and disasters, and identify practical steps how national statistical offices in coordination with national agencies responsible for disaster management can support disaster management and risk reduction. The work takes into account the relevant issues raised in the context of SDGs and the post-2015 Development Agenda.

The work of the task force is being closely coordinated with the activities of the Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics in Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and the UNECE activities on climate change related statistics.

Members of the Task Force are experts from Armenia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Republic of Moldova, South Africa, Turkey and United States. The international organisations represented in the Task Force are Eurostat, UNECE, UNESCAP, UNISDR, WHO and WMO.

Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators and the Workshop on Water Statistics

The 10th meeting of the Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators was held in Geneva from 12-13 May 2015. A workshop on water statistics and water indicators was held on 11 May 2015, back-to-back with the meeting.

The Joint Task Force considered progress with producing and online sharing of selected environmental indicators from the UNECE *Guidelines for the Application of Environmental Indicators in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*. The analysis of the availability and quality of the indicators showed that countries have made considerable progress in this area.

The Joint Task Force also discussed some issues related to the review of waste statistics and waste indicators. It was concluded that developing an international framework on waste statistics would be needed to allow harmonising classifications, terms and definitions globally.

The meeting discussed future activities of the Task Force in relation to the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA).

The workshop on water statistics and water indicators focussed on water resources, water abstraction and water use. The overall goal was to familiarise participants with the most relevant statistical concepts and to provide a platform for mutual exchange of experiences on water data collection, data validation and data sharing.

EUROSTAT NEWS

(Contributed by Anton Steurer, Karin Blumenthal and Jurgen Forster, Eurostat)

DIMESA Meeting

The annual meeting of the Directors of sectoral and environmental statistics and accounts (DIMESA) took place on 10-11 June 2015 in Luxembourg. This group of Directors has the responsibility of environment statistics and accounts, regional statistics and spatial information including land use/land cover statistics, energy statistics, transport statistics, and sustainable development and Europe 2020.

The agenda of the meeting included strategic discussions, preparation of legal acts, cross-cutting issues and approval of mandates of reporting working groups.

The strategic discussions included the worldwide developments on Sustainable Development Goals, priorities for further developing the environmental accounts, the 'GDP and beyond' action plan for 2015-2017, priority setting for environmental accounts and the Energy Union as one of the ten top priorities of the Juncker Commission.

The discussion of draft legislative texts regarded environmental accounts, a legal framework for territorial classifications and typologies for European statistics and natural gas and electricity prices.

Cross-cutting items were the amendment to Regulation (EC) No 223/2009, Annual Work Programme 2016, extension of the European Statistical Programme 2013-17 to 2018-20 and Vision 2020.

DIMESA adopted in the meeting the proposals for implementing and delegated acts for environmental accounts, endorsed further work on the proposal for a legal framework of territorial classifications and typologies for European statistics and approved the mandates of the working groups.

European Statistics on Waste

The annual meeting of the working group on waste statistics took place in March 2015 in Luxembourg. The agenda of the meeting included inter alia topics on the development of indicators on waste management and the improvement of municipal waste statistics. Progress has been made in these areas and further guidance on municipal waste reporting is planned to be issued by Eurostat by the end of the year. The latest data and publications can be viewed on the website of the Environmental Data Centre on waste (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/waste/overview>). The website provides easy access to Eurostat's database and to methodological information and guidance on European statistics on waste.

Meeting of the Eurostat WG 'Water Statistics'

The Eurostat Working Group 'Water Statistics' met on 23-24 April 2015 in Luxembourg: delegates from EU and EFTA Members States, as well as from other European countries and partner organisations discussed the state and development of European water statistics.

The main point of the meeting was a discussion about the future of water statistics, including a medium-term perspective for the development of water accounts. Eurostat explained that it intended to continue the implementation of conclusions of the review of water statistics it had done in the years before, namely further simplification of the questionnaires, streamlining with other reporting, support to responding countries (training, grants) and the development of water accounts. The latter would also offer a perspective for introduction of legal cover through the existing European Regulation on environmental economic accounts. The WG generally supported Eurostat's proposals and approach, including the priority setting for water accounts with physical and monetary flow accounts in the first place, followed by asset accounts in the second place and emission accounts with low priority. Any other water-related accounts (quality, ecosystem etc.) would not be tackled at all by Eurostat. First methodological work for the water accounts had resulted in a manual for compiling physical water flow accounts: endorsed earlier on by the WG on environmental accounting, it was welcomed by the WG water statistics as well.

Eurostat also provided feedback from the recent water data collections by means of the OECD/Eurostat Joint Questionnaire on Inland Waters and the Eurostat Regional Environmental Questionnaire. The response rates had not increased as compared to earlier reporting. While the overall quality of the received data was acceptable, timeliness and completeness of the data sets were not always satisfactory; the main reason behind this are the cuts in staff and budget experienced by the reporting national statistical institutes.

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Seven countries presented the results of their statistical development projects subsidized by Eurostat grants; the topics range from gap-filling from alternative/administrative data sources to the improvement of national data flows to geo-referencing of data.

Eurostat's partners at EU level, the Commission's Directorate-General for the Environment (DG ENV) and the European Environment Agency (EEA), presented their current work strands including the need for and use of water statistics. While DG ENV takes care of European legislation in the water domain, the EEA does independent assessments and reports about the state of the environment. The EEA presented modelling results for a water consumption index with regional resolution at sub-basin scale.

With regard to improving support to Member States, Eurostat had commissioned a study on the potential use of alternative data sources that also resulted in an update of the water statistics manual. The results of this study – like all other meeting documents – can be consulted and downloaded from the Circabc (<https://circabc.europa.eu/faces/jsp/extension/wai/navigation/container.jsp>) file repository.

EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY NEWS

EEA Indicators and Assessments

(Contributed by Jock Martin and Roberta Pignatelli)

One of the main tasks of the European Environment Agency (EEA) is to publish a five yearly report on the state of, trends in and prospects for the environment. Since 1995, the EEA has produced five such reports.

The 2015 edition (<http://www.eea.europa.eu/soer>), published in March, is based on objective, reliable and comparable environmental information, and draws on the evidence and knowledge base available to the EEA and the European environment information and observation network (Eionet), a network of 39 countries. The report provides a comprehensive, integrated assessment of the European environment's state, trends and prospects, and places it in a global context. It informs European environmental policy implementation between 2015 and 2020, and reflects on opportunities to recalibrate policies, knowledge, investments and innovations in line with the current EU policy agenda, in particular the long-term 2050 vision of the 7th Environmental Action Programme (7th EAP). The EU is leading the way through policies such as the 7th EAP, the 2030 Climate and Energy package, the Europe 2020 Strategy and the Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme, all of which seek to balance social, economic and environmental considerations.

As a knowledge actor, the EEA and its partners are responding to these challenges by designing a new knowledge agenda that links support to policy implementation with an increased understanding of how to achieve more systemic long-term objectives. This is guided by innovations that break out of silo-thinking, facilitate information sharing and integration, and provide new indicators to enable policymakers to compare economic, social and environmental performance. Foresight and other methods will be increasingly used to inform the pathways towards 2050.

The current knowledge base for environmental policy is based on monitoring, data, indicators and assessments, mainly linked to the implementation of legislation, formal scientific research and 'citizen science' initiatives. However, there are gaps between the available knowledge and that required to meet emerging policy demands.

Knowledge gaps are highlighted throughout the SOER2015 (The European environment – state and outlook 2015). Gaps that merit particular attention relate to systems science; complex environmental change and systemic risks; how Europe's environment is affected by global megatrends; the interplay between socio-economic and environmental factors; feasible transitions in production-consumption systems; environmental risks to health; and the inter-relationships between economic development, environmental change and human well-being. In addition, there are areas where knowledge development can support both policymaking and investment decisions, namely integrated environmental-economic accounts and derived indicators. This includes physical and monetary accounts for natural capital and ecosystem services and developing and applying indicators to complement and go beyond GDP.

Further implementation of the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) principle of 'produce once use often', and the use of common approaches and standards (e.g. INSPIRE, Copernicus) can help streamline effort and release resources. Current environmental information systems should also incorporate new information on emerging themes and forward-looking information as knowledge gaps are addressed in the coming years.

UNEP NEWS

Discussing Environmental Data Needs for the Global Environment Outlook

(Contributed by UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean)

The first UN Environment Assembly – which met in 2014 – gave UNEP a mandate to develop a new edition of the Global Environment Outlook report (GEO 6) through an intergovernmental process ending in 2018. GEO 6 will be based on regional environmental assessments, giving a complete picture of the environmental drivers that contribute to human well-being, as well as policy analysis to support the achievement of internationally agreed environmental goals.

Underpinning an assessment of this nature are knowledge and data on key variables that describe the state and trends of the environment. To discuss issues of data management and online information sharing, UNEP called for a series of Regional Environmental Information Network Conferences, held between April and May 2015. The main topics of the Conferences included the generation and use of data, indicators, maps and other information for the regional GEO assessment, as well as the development of online environmental information platforms at national and global level.

GEO 6 authors, contributors, governments and other stakeholders will use UNEP Live (www.uneplive.org) as the main platform for information exchange in the context of GEO 6. At national level, and complementary to official information platforms, governments can use the “National Reporting System”, a new tool to support indicator development and fast reporting to multilateral environmental agreements (such as the Convention on Biological Diversity). Interested Governments can contact UNEP for more information.

COUNTRY NEWS

The Application of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES) in Jamaica

(Contributed by Janet Geohagen-Martin, Statistical Institute of Jamaica)

The environment statistics unit of the Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) produced its first report on the environment, *Jamaica's Environment 2001, Environment Statistics and State of the Environment Report* in 2001. The Pressure-State-Response mechanism, along with the 1984 FDES, were the methodologies used for compiling the statistics. The areas covered were human settlements, economy, solid and liquid waste, land and mineral resources, agriculture, forestry and watershed management, biological resources, protected areas, freshwater, coastal zone and marine resources, tourism, energy and transport, air and climate, natural disasters & environmental accidents.

Jamaica, through STATIN, participated in the revision of the FDES and the development of the Basic Set of Environment Statistics, and is a member of the Expert Group on Environment Statistics. At a national conference on the national statistics system in February 2011, the work being done on the FDES was introduced to stakeholders in ministries and agencies.

In November 2012, with the assistance of a CARICOM project, selected stakeholders in the area of biodiversity (forestry, fishing, agriculture sectors and protected areas as well as the environment ministry) were introduced to the FDES in a three-day meeting at the offices of STATIN. The meeting was advised about the data collected and compiled as well as any data limitations with respect to the FDES.

In 2013 Jamaica, collaborated with the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) in conducting the Environment Statistics Self-Assessment Tool (ESSAT) that accompanies the FDES.

In 2014, under the project “Strengthening and Development of Official Statistics by Creating a Regional Framework for Latin America and the Caribbean”, the FDES was used for a diagnosis of the available statistics, reporting mechanisms, availability, regularity, etc. of environmental data in Jamaica. Using the ESSAT toolkit, it was possible to ascertain which data gaps have been filled since the tool was used for the FDES in 2012. New data sources were found in the area of air emissions and monitoring, water quality testing and weather. Under this project, the environmental agency, NEPA, was introduced more fully to the FDES and officers there were instrumental in completing the online phase of the toolkit.

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The environment statistics unit at STATIN suffers from a lack of financial and human resources for the necessary surveys and further data collection and institutional coordination. The Institute is therefore unable to conduct the necessary workshops to introduce the FDES to a wider audience. Despite these constraints, the Institute continues to produce reports on the environment on an annual basis.

Publications using the FDES

Since the introduction of the revised FDES 2013, STATIN has published three reports. The first was *Jamaica's Environment in Your Pocket 2013*, a collection of environment-related statistics in tables and graphs with minimal text. The second was *Energy Statistics in Jamaica 2013* which covered both global and local energy statistics. The global section covered world energy supply and demand of fossil fuels and renewable energy. Available energy statistics in Jamaica was covered in the second section and the topics included supply and demand of energy, the energy balance and emissions. The third publication was an update of the pocketbook, *Jamaica's Environment in Your Pocket 2015*.

Hungary's Involvement in the Expert Group on Environment Statistics and Ongoing Work in Environment Statistics

(Contributed by Pál Bóday, Hungarian Central Statistical Office)

Hungary participated in the second meeting of the Expert Group on Environment Statistics, shared practical experiences in environmental statistics and undertook involvement in the preparation of methodological guidance for the Manual on the Basic Set of Environment Statistics.

In Hungary environmental statistics are prepared by many different institutions but the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO) has a leading role in the compilation of statistics and in data transmission to international organizations. This role has been strengthened by the newly revised European Union (EU) regulation on Environment Statistics.

In the HCSO the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) has been used to assess existing environmental statistics and to identify gaps, while the Environment Statistics Self-Assessment Tool (ESSAT) is planned to be used to further assess current environmental statistics.

Currently at HCSO the development of environmental statistics focuses on the improvement of basic statistics serving EU regulated environmental accounts on air emissions, environmental taxes, material flows, environmental expenditures, environmental goods and services, and physical energy flows.

Italy's Experience in the FDES 2013 and Activities in the Area of Environment Statistics

(Contributed by Angela Ferruzza, Italian National Institute of Statistics)

The Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat) participated in the UNSD Expert Group for the Revision of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013), and is also now a member of the subsequent Expert Group on Environment Statistics working, inter alia, on ongoing methodological work in support of the implementation of the FDES 2013.

In order to develop and strengthen environment statistics and to identify gaps into the National Statistical System, the FDES 2013 could be very useful. Consequently it has been presented in the Italian National Statistical System workshop organized to improve the Environment and Territory Statistical Quality, to help the development of components of the environmental dimension, and to face the challenges inherent in the production of these statistics due to their multi-disciplinary nature. The workshop was organized with the participation of the different data producers working within specific areas of environment statistics. They work not only at National Statistical Offices, but also at Environment Ministries or other relevant ministries at national and sub-national levels, and at the Environment Agency.

The FDES 2013 and its developments have been presented also during the GRASPA-SIS 2015 Meeting (June 2015) during a scientific session dedicated to the Development and challenges of Environmental Official Statistics among the "International frameworks for environmental statistics and their application to climate change related statistics" (<http://meetings.sis-statistica.org/index.php/graspa2015/graspa2015/paper/view/3332>).

Following the suggestions of the FDES 2013, capacity building at regional and national level has been improved by developing the institutional dimension of environment statistics through the identification of the stakeholders in the data production process, by enhancing their inter institutional collaboration and also by organizing specific meetings and working groups such as those on Energy consumption of households, on Environmental quality of urban areas, on Water Statistics, on Anthropic Pressures and Mining resources.

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At this point, it would be useful to give a brief overview of some activities on environment statistics developed or improved at Istat in recent years and also related to the FDES.

Istat periodically collects information on water resources for domestic use through a specific census with the aim of describing the state of urban water services in Italy. The focus is on: (i) abstracted and transmitted water; (ii) water supply systems; (iii) sewerage; and (iv) wastewater treatment plants. Civil Water Census timeline has allowed the development of information basis that is progressively updated by considering both the European Directives on Water Policy and the increasing request for information from public institutions and private stakeholders; both the contents and the production process have been significantly renewed in recent years. The last census (2013) has been conducted by web-based questionnaire (data capturing methodology). Water statistics data are published on <http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/127380>.

Istat's engagement in water Statistics became more intense in recent years also with the starting of a project aimed to calculate some indicators on freshwater resources, water abstraction by use, water use by supply category, wastewater treatment, and sewage sludge. The first results of this project are related to the calculation of indicators on water balance and water resources available at national and sub-national level. Moreover, Istat carried out the Meteo-climatic and hydrologic indicators research project. This project was designed to develop a geographical data-warehouse.

The daily data collected are related to meteorological, agro-meteorological and hydrological variables measured since 1951 and come from more than 6,000 gauging stations (meteo-climatic and hydrometric) provided by several national, regional and local institutions. Actually the development of a geo-statistical database related to time series of the meteo-climatic variables throughout Italy, at a fine spatial scale that could also consider socio-demographic indicators is ongoing. Latest data provided by Istat are published on <http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/153668> and on <http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/153580>.

As part of Istat's statistical production dedicated to energy issues, a crucial role is played by the new survey on energy consumption of households, carried out for the first time in Italy in 2013, in collaboration with other national institutions. The energy consumption of households has become increasingly important over time in the determination of total national consumption. As a consequence, the residential sector has been affected by a number of EU and national policy measures for the promotion of energy efficiency and renewable sources. The survey will supply the annual data on residential energy consumption, the collection of which has recently been made mandatory by the European Regulation on Energy Statistics (no. 1099/2008) and it will provide the essential information to quantify residential sector consumption according to different uses and sources of energy, with a focus on renewable energy and biomass. Data on the consumption of renewable sources is also important for monitoring the so-called 20-20-20 targets for Europe. The first report on energy residential statistics has been disseminated on <http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/142173>.

Since 2000, environmental data on municipalities have been collected every year for 116 municipalities that are also capitals of provinces. This survey has the aim to produce statistics and indicators on 8 themes: air, energy, green areas, noise, transport, waste, water, eco-management policies applied by local governments. The survey looks at the pressure put on the urban environment and measures the responses. In this last period, an increase in inter-institutional collaboration for building new statistical information to match emerging information needs (urban smartness, monitoring implementation of environmental legislation, Eurostat Urban Audit) took place. Consequently, a consistent set of information and new focus diffusion with analysis of the survey data integrated with other sources and correlated thematic issues have been disseminated. The latest data are published on <http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/141296>, on <http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/162857>, and on <http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/129010>.

The project on Equitable and Sustainable Well-being (Benessere Equo e Sostenibile - BES) is aimed, moreover, at producing a set of statistical indicators (social and environmental) of a "fair and sustainable welfare", to be considered besides the traditional macroeconomic indicators, based on the belief that various aspects of life quality contribute to it to a significant extent. "Environment" and "Landscape and Cultural Heritage" are two of the 12 domains identified in order to develop specific subsets. The Reports on "Equitable and Sustainable Well-being" (BES) are published on <http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/84348>, <http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/126613>.

Upcoming VII International Conference on Agricultural Statistics (2016)

The International Conference on Agricultural Statistics (ICAS) is organized every three years, starting from 1998, under the auspices of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) Committee on Agricultural Statistics. The Conference convenes senior agricultural statisticians from all over the world, mainly representatives from national statistical offices and ministries of agriculture. ICAS Conferences are open to all producers, suppliers, trainers and users of Agricultural Statistics, such as economists, statisticians, agronomists, researchers, analysts and decision-makers from government entities, the academia, development partners and international organizations. Related environmental themes will be discussed at the meeting. The ICAS 2016 Conference will be held at FAO headquarters in Rome, 26-28 October 2016. For further information, please see: <http://icas2016.istat.it/>.

Mauritius – Implementation of United Nations Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013)

(Contributed by Devika Balgobin, Statistics Mauritius)

The 1984 FDES had been instrumental in the development and compilation of the environment statistics and indicators in Mauritius. Development of environment statistics in Mauritius started in the mid-nineties and in 1999, Statistics Mauritius (SM) set up a statistical unit at the Ministry of Environment to cater to the increasing demand for statistics in that area. The first report dedicated to Environment Statistics, namely the 'Digest of Environment Statistics' was published by SM in 2004 and covered the period 1993 to 2002, wherever possible. The digest which subsequently became an annual publication, is widely used by, inter alia, the public, researchers, planners and decision makers. The statistics unit comprises one part time Statistician, one Senior Statistical Officer and one Statistical Officer.

Since environment statistics are multi-disciplinary covering a wide range of subject areas, the data are collected from numerous sources mainly: (i) statistics units of SM (Energy and Water, Agriculture, Transport, Census and Surveys, Trade); (ii) Ministries/Departments (Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security, Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Economy, Water Resources Unit, The Meteorological Services, Waste Water Management Authority, Central Water Authority); (iii) From Reports (Mauritius Environment Outlook, Second National Communication); and (iv) Censuses and Surveys (mainly from environment related questions added to the Continuous Multipurpose Household Survey).

Implementation of the FDES 2013 in Mauritius started following the regional workshop, "Environment Statistics in support of the implementation of the FDES 2013", organized by UNSD in collaboration with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and which was held in Mauritius in January 2015. At the workshop, attended by participants from 13 African countries, the adoption of a Roadmap to implement the FDES 2013 covering the period 2015-2017 was discussed and agreed upon.

Mauritius is implementing the Roadmap to enhance its environment statistics. At the first instance, the list of environment statistics as prescribed in the FDES 2013, was scrutinized and it was observed that around 26% of the approximately 460 statistics are already published regularly by SM. The next step was the identification of the institutions which can provide data to compile the missing statistics and corresponding indicators. At present, working sessions are being held with the data suppliers to apprise them of the revised framework, its implementation and to discuss issues such as relevancy, availability, reliability, periodicity and timeliness of the data which they will be required to provide. These working sessions are also helping to foster inter-institutional collaboration. Indicators compiled will adhere to the FDES 2013 and be disseminated in the Digest of Environment Statistics in November 2015. To this end, the Environment Statistics Section of UNSD has provided comments and editorial assistance on a draft of the Digest of Environment Statistics covering the period 2004 to 2013. The comments will be taken into consideration in the forthcoming digest that will cover the period 2005 to 2014.

Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) in Zimbabwe

(Contributed by Manasa Viriri, Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT))

Following the Workshop on Environment Statistics in support of the implementation of the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) that was organized by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), in collaboration with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) in Calodyne, Mauritius from 26 to 29 January 2015, Zimbabwe is among the countries that have started the implementation of the FDES 2013. The FDES 2013 will help to address the increasing demand for environmental information in support of integrated policies and programmes.

A project to strengthen environment statistics is now being implemented with funding being provided by the COMESA Secretariat under the Regional Integration Support Mechanism (RISM) fund. The sequential project activities involve the formation of a national working group (composed mainly of the National Environment Statistics Committee members); conduction of working group meetings for prioritization of indicators followed by an indicators final list prioritization workshop; national environmental data collection and collation exercise; and report writing and dissemination. While the other activities are already done, the data collection and collation exercise is taking place in July 2015. In September 2015 the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT) will convene a stakeholders' workshop to validate the data collected. The Environment Statistics report should be available by November 2015. The report will be the 4th on environment statistics produced by ZIMSTAT, preceded by the 1994, 2000, 2004 and 2010 reports.

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The RISM programme also seeks to build the capacity of institutions involved in the production of environment sector statistics through provision of technical assistance and equipment required to produce the statistics. The technical assistance is in the form of training in geospatial data collection skills, that is geographical information systems and remote sensing. The training is planned for September 2015.

The Environment Statistics Committee is composed of 18 key stakeholder institutions dealing with environmental issues. The setting up of the Committee was an appropriate framework for developing co-ordination and collaboration modalities for the sector statistics given that it is composed of major producers and users of environment statistics. The Committee members are a pool of national experts in the field of environment who are tasked to guide ZIMSTAT in the compilation of national environment statistics by providing technical backstopping, advisory role and facilitating coordination within the sector, among other terms of reference. ZIMSTAT is the Secretariat while the Ministry of Environment, Water and Climate and the Institute of Environmental Studies (University of Zimbabwe) co-chair the Committee.

In 2010, an assessment and description of environment statistics in the country were done. Its findings put forward some long term programme goals for the sector statistics. Some of the long term goals are the creation of a mega-database of environment statistics easily accessible by users and the establishment of the integrated system for environmental and economic accounting. The programme goals are also included in Zimbabwe's National Strategy for the Development of Statistics 11 which spans from 2016 to 2020.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Workshop on Environment Statistics in Support of the Implementation of the FDES 2013 organized by UNSD and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for the ECOWAS member states (Lome, Togo, 19-23 October 2015).

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