

Statistical Commission
Forty-fourth session
26 February – 1 March 2013
Item 3 (d) of the provisional agenda
Environmental-economic accounting

Background document
Available in English only

The process of drafting SEEA Energy

Prepared by the Bureau of the Committee of Experts on
Environmental-Economic Accounting

The process of drafting SEEA-Energy

A. Introduction

1. The *System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Energy* (SEEA-Energy) is a subsystem of the SEEA Central Framework. It complements the SEEA Central Framework by elaborating and detailing the conceptual presentation for organizing information related to energy and its role in the economy. At the same time SEEA-Energy aims to be a low-cost extension of energy statistics and balances as described by the International Recommendation for Energy Statistics, IRES, by including the information collected on the basis of IRES into a framework coherent with the national accounts. SEEA-Energy and IRES are therefore two complementary and coordinated documents.

2. The drafting of the SEEA-Energy has been undertaken under the management and control of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental Economic Accounting (UNCEEA). It started in 2008 when the UNCEEA at its third meeting in June approved the scope and coverage of the SEEA-Energy¹. The draft chapters of the SEEA-Energy were developed in accordance with the content and outline as approved by the UNCEEA and updated by the expert group. Progress of work in drafting the SEEA-Energy was reported to the 4th-7th meetings of the UNCEEA. The expert group meeting on energy accounts reviewed the draft in October 2011. UNCEEA expressed strong support for holding a global consultation on the draft chapters of SEEA-Energy. It stressed that SEEA-Energy needs to be fully aligned with the SEEA Central Framework and be consistent to the extent possible with IRES. Furthermore, UNCEEA expressed support for the development of the Energy Statistics Compilers Manual (ESCM) and welcomed the decision that the ESCM will also support the implementation of SEEA-Energy.

3. The drafting of the SEEA-Energy proceeded in close coordination with the drafting of the SEEA Central Framework. The issues discussed during the revision of the SEEA Central Framework were actually addressed as part of the drafting of the SEEA-Energy and the early drafts of the SEEA-Energy provided textual inputs to the SEEA Central Framework. Because of the need to ensure full consistency between the SEEA Central Framework and the SEEA Energy text, it was decided to wait for the completion of the SEEA-Energy until after the adoption of the SEEA Central Framework. Furthermore, resource constraints at UNSD further delayed the finalization of the document.

4. This paper presents the progress of work in resolving the list of issues for the SEEA-Energy and the current status of drafting the chapters in Section B. Section C presents an updated timeline of next steps towards the adoption of the SEEA-Energy.

¹ See SEEA-Energy: Process leading to the publication, Paper prepared by UNSD for the Third meeting of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting, New York June 24-26, 2009. ESA/STAT/AC.157.

B. Drafting of the SEEA-Energy

5. In 2008 UNSD recruited a consultant to draft Chapters of the SEEA-Energy and address issues related to energy in the issue list for the SEEA revision based on discussions held at a special session on energy accounts at the 12th Meeting of the London Group on Environmental Accounting in December 2012. This work provided inputs in the drafting of the SEEA Central Framework. The drafting of the SEEA-Energy was put on hold until completion of the SEEA Central Framework to ensure full consistency between the two documents.

6. An expert group on energy accounts, consisting of experts on energy statistics and environmental-economic accounts from countries and international agencies met to discuss the draft chapters of the SEEA-Energy on 5-7 October 2011 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The expert group agreed on a number of outstanding issues and proposals including (a) the reordering of the chapters to consider physical and monetary flows first, then physical and monetary assets; and (b) the presentation of tables in a form familiar to both energy statisticians and accountants. The last recommendation implied that more tables needed to be included in the SEEA-Energy as opposed to the SEEA Central Framework to elaborate on the step-by-step compilation of the accounts from basic statistics as well as from energy balances. Furthermore, the Expert Group stressed the importance that SEEA-Energy be fully aligned in concepts with the SEEA Central Framework and coherent with IRES.

7. The participation of the expert group in the drafting of SEEA Energy continued in 2012 through multiple rounds of consultation. In particular revised drafts were sent for comment and review to the expert group in February, September and December. During each round of consultation, the draft was revised to reflect the comments of the expert group. In particular the text was updated to be fully consistent with the SEEA Central Framework and coherent with IRES, including updated tables and terminology. The discussion of treatment of energy from renewable sources was revised as was the discussion on valuation of mineral and energy resources. The draft was also updated to include other editorial changes and clarifications as discussed by the Expert Group.

8. At the beginning of 2013, the Expert Group recommended to circulate the SEEA-Energy for global consultation and upon recommendation of the Bureau of the UNCEEA, UNSD launched the consultation on 15 January 2013.

C. Towards the adoption of the SEEA-Energy

9. The full draft of the SEEA-Energy consisting of seven chapters was circulated for global consultation on 15 January 2013 with a deadline of 19 February 2013. The consultation involved national statistical offices and regional and international organizations, to ensure universal relevance, applicability and feasibility of implementation for the SEEA-Energy. A summary of the outcome of the global consultation will be presented orally at the 44th Statistical Commission.

10. The Statistical Commission will consider the process of finalizing SEEA-Energy at its 44th session. The suggested process is the following:

- UNSD will summarize comments received through the global consultation and the way it plans to address the comments (beginning March 2013);
- UNSD will submit a revised draft incorporating the comments received during the global consultation to the Expert Group (end of March 2013)
- Expert Group will review and approve the document (end April 2013);
- UNSD will submit the final document to the Bureau of the UNCEEA for approval (beginning May 2013)
- Bureau of the UNCEEA will submit the final SEEA-Energy to the Bureau of the United Nations Statistical Commission for adoption.