

Statistical Commission
Forty-ninth session
6 – 9 March 2018
Item 3h of the provisional agenda

Background document
Available in English only

Items for discussion and decision: environmental-economic accounting

**Communication Strategy for the Implementation of the System of Environmental-
Economic Accounting**

Prepared by United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic
Accounting

1. Introduction

The objective of this communication strategy is to increase implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) and mainstream its use in integrated policy making. At the heart of the strategy is a 'sense and respond' approach that provides a clear sense of purpose and core communication messages and tools to enable the members of the UNCEEA to effectively promote the use of SEEA accounts in decision-making processes. All UNCEEA members are expected to use this strategy to guide their own actions in their own contexts in their own ways. By using this strategy the UNCEEA members become a distributed salesforce for the SEEA.

This strategy has been developed for use by UNCEEA members and their agencies but it may be used or adapted by anyone interested in promoting the use of the SEEA, including countries. It is suggested that countries adapt this strategy to formulate communication plans and materials at a national level to promote the SEEA to stakeholders.

2. Communication Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the communication strategy is to guide members of the United Nations Committee of Experts (UNCEEA) and other proponents of the SEEA to contribute to the (global, regional and national) implementation of the SEEA in as many countries as possible and to mainstreaming the use of the SEEA in integrated policy making.

The objectives of the Communication Strategy are to articulate:

- the kinds of decisions SEEA can inform;
- what opportunities we will use (processes, forums);
- who the key audiences are;
- what the key messages are;
- the outputs and actions we will use to promote the SEEA; and
- how we will monitor progress.

3. Communication Principles

Communications should be developed and delivered according to the following guidelines/principles:

- Adapt communications to discrete audiences based on audience needs and interests
- Target communications to those persons/groups that are skilled at promoting new ideas, as well as organisational or cultural gatekeepers in NSOs and policy and planning ministries
- Design information to deliver it in an open, regular and in a straight forward manner
- Ensure that all communications contain consistent core messages
- Continually reinforce the reasons for implementation of the SEEA and application to integrated policy making
- Consistently ask for feedback and lessons learnt
- Evaluate communication products to ensure messages are understood and that the most effective modes of media are being used, including social media
- Share knowledge with the international community on implementation and research issues

4. Targeting Audiences with Specific Messages and Products

The strength of the SEEA lies in its integrative capacity, which facilitates understanding of the interactions between the economy and the environment and is wholly consistent with the System of National Accounts (SNA). While the SEEA has broad applicability across the public and private sectors, the majority of decisions that SEEA can support are made by governments, in policy and planning ministries. Thus, the priority for this phase of the strategy is to reach those persons who are skilled at promoting new ideas within, and to, government as well as organizational or cultural leaders in National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and policy and planning ministries.

The crux of the communication strategy is to define a range of core messages that can be applied to all audiences, supplemented with more specific messages for targeted audiences. Each target audience (i.e. policy makers, researchers, business leaders, etc.), will have specific interests and priorities which can be addressed through tailoring of key messages to suit the circumstances

As communication opportunities arise, UNCEEA members will need to assess the present knowledge and commitment of each target group, and adapt this strategy to achieve the desired level of commitment, varying from *first contact via awareness* to *understanding, engagement, involvement* and finally to *full commitment*. For each target group, the desired level of commitment should be identified and the products specified below should be used. Members of the UNCEEA must know their audience and target the individuals/groups that are best at promoting new ideas to decision-makers or who are in a position to authorise action by others.

Target group	Characteristics	Key messages	Proposed products/actions	Opportunities for contact
Leaders of NSOs and environmental agencies	Responsible for SEEA implementation at national level, funding	<p>SEEA provides data to measure the sustainability of economic growth by accounting for natural environment</p> <p>SEEA adds value to data that is already collected and is fully compatible with SNA</p> <p>SEEA is a conceptual framework that integrates environmental and economic data</p>	<p>Case studies</p> <p>Presentation at high level meetings</p> <p>Twitter</p>	<p>Intergovernmental forums</p> <p>Conferences and seminars</p> <p>High level meetings</p> <p>Informal networks</p>
Government (policy and planning ministries)	Responsible for policy, funding	<p>SEEA provides data to measure the sustainability of economic growth by accounting for natural environment</p> <p>SEEA is a conceptual framework that integrates scientific and economic data</p> <p>SEEA methodology is detailed but results are easy to interpret</p> <p>SEEA informs choices around taxation, regulation, planning, and environmental/economic policy</p>	<p>Presentation at high level meetings</p> <p>Twitter</p> <p>Case studies</p> <p>Talking points and briefing material</p>	<p>Intergovernmental forums</p> <p>Conferences and seminars</p> <p>High level meetings</p> <p>Social media</p>

Scientific bodies (meteorological, geospatial, etc.)	Can help support an enduring pipeline of SEEA compliant data Can develop approaches that are compatible with SEEA	SEEA provides concrete opportunities to apply geospatial technology/data and link it to socioeconomic data SEEA adds value to data that is already collected and is fully compatible with SNA The SEEA does not replace environmental data, it provides a new platform for it Investing in streams of SEEA compliant data rather than multiple one-off studies is a more efficient use of resources.	“Why SEEA” publication Website Newsletter	Conferences and seminars Web presence
NSO and environmental agency staff	Implement and help further develop the SEEA	SEEA adds value to data that is already collected and is fully compatible with SNA SEEA methodology is detailed but results are easy to interpret	“Why SEEA” publication Newsletter Website Twitter	Conferences and seminars Workshops and trainings Web presence
International and regional agencies surrounding the SDGs	Responsible for creating indicators to measure progress of SDGs, promoting use of indicators and underlying data	SEEA provides data to measure the sustainability of economic growth by accounting for natural environment SEEA adds value to data that is already collected and does not compete with other indicators Accounts are objective and show both sides of the ledger	Presentation at high level meetings Website Newsletter Twitter	Conferences and seminars Programme meetings IAEG meetings Social media Web presence
Journalists	Instrumental in reaching a large audience	SEEA provides data to measure the sustainability of economic growth by accounting for natural environment Accounts are objective and show both sides of the ledger Methodology is detailed but the results are easy to interpret	Website Press kit/“Why SEEA” publication Media releases, talking points and interviews with SEEA members about specific accounts Twitter	Conferences and seminars High level meetings with press presence Social media Web presence
Business leaders and chambers of commerce	Instrumental in achieving Green Growth and sustainability	SEEA provides data to measure the sustainability of economic growth by accounting for natural environment	Press kit/“Why SEEA” publication Case studies of private enterprise accounts	Conferences and seminars Social media Web presence

		The SEEA provides data to measure corporate sustainability Methodology is detailed but the results are easy to interpret	Website Twitter	
NGOs	Partners in implementation	SEEA provides data to measure the sustainability of economic growth by accounting for natural environment Accounts are objective and show both sides of the ledger The SEEA can be applied by NGOs to measure sustainability Methodology is detailed but the results are easy to interpret	Website Newsletter Twitter	Web presence Workshops Conferences and seminars
Civil society	Instrumental in achieving Green Growth and sustainability	SEEA provides data to measure the sustainability of economic growth by accounting for natural environment Accounts are objective and show both sides of the ledger Methodology is detailed but the results are easy to interpret	Website Newsletter Twitter	Web presence

5. Identifying Opportunities

The following communication opportunities and activities will be used:

- Website

The new SEEA website will be the main platform from which the communication strategy will be delivered. When fully developed, the site will be dynamic and user friendly and will support two-way communication.

The website will reach the largest audience and thus must facilitate learning, communication and discussion for a variety of parties. The website should maintain a general and open character with subsites that may be more technical or closed in nature. Since the website will be the main means of communication with civil society, technical jargon should be kept to a minimum, particularly on the main pages.

A knowledge base will be built for the website. As members produce communication products within their own local contexts, these can be shared via the knowledge base to create a repository of documents and presentations in multiple languages, as well as links to NSO pages/products on environmental-economic accounting. Communication products may include case studies, briefings, media releases, frequently asked questions and plain language talking points or speeches.

The website will also be the launching point for the SEEA newsletter, with sections devoted to updates from each programme and from international agencies and countries. In addition, users should have the ability to search and filter documents in multiple ways (i.e. by language, topic, country, type of document, region, etc.). As part of this knowledge base, a forum should also be developed. This forum can facilitate communication and discussion within specific interested communities and enable more technical discussion. This forum should be moderated and subject to log-in requirements.

The website should also keep target groups up to date through push notifications on the latest SEEA news and events. It should host a sign-up for the newsletter and a calendar with all kinds of SEEA events (i.e. technical, UNCEEA, London Group, country workshops, regional workshops, etc.). UNCEEA members will be able to identify which events they can attend, to ensure that adequate representation of UNCEEA is maintained across the board. In addition, e-learning should be made available through the website, to make learning materials as accessible as possible.

- Workshops:

Workshops can be very effective mechanisms for engaging potential champions and change agents and promoting the benefits of SEEA to new audiences. Over time members are expected to contribute to shared knowledge about successful workshop formats that are suited to different audiences and objectives. Where possible, members should contribute to workshops and events that are delivered in their own countries and to developing countries in their regions.

- Conferences/seminars:

Using the 'sense and respond' approach that underpins this strategy, members are expected to take advantage of opportunities to present at conferences and events in their own countries or networks and use these events to communicate the key messages of this strategy. SEEA members are expected to dedicate expertise and time to propose, organise and participate in a range of events.

Members should review the website for examples provided by other members and identify or create similar opportunities in their own contexts. Members can re-use or adapt materials shared by their UNCEEA colleagues. This may include proposing papers or presentations on the SEEA or specific accounts as a part of events that are not solely about environmental statistics, for example, scientific or ecological conferences, planning or regulatory forums, forestry, mining energy or agriculture forums or formal government meetings. Opportunities to provide SEEA presentations within NSOs should also be actively pursued. Proposals should be put forward for side meetings or information sessions adjacent to related forums. All presentations should include the core messages outlined in this strategy and tailored messages for specific target audiences.

For further development of the SEEA, scientific conferences can be organized to present and discuss results of further research, engage specifically with certain fields (e.g. geospatial), and share feedback from experiences with the usage/implementation by the scientific community of researchers and statistical experts. Promotion of the SEEA in existing forums like conferences of EAERE and IARIW should also take place. In addition, conferences and seminars of potential partner projects can also provide opportunities to propose collaboration and use of the SEEA.

- Newsletters/brochures

Well-designed brochures in print and digital form should be widely distributed to target groups. These brochures should address the primary question, “Why SEEA?”, and multiple versions of the brochure should be created. Each version should be designed with a target group in mind and reflect the group’s characteristics and key messages. These brochures should be shared with countries so that they can be adapted and used to promote the SEEA on a national level.

A digital newsletter should be created to keep groups informed and committed at a high level. This newsletter should contain information on current projects and highlight the work/involvement of different target groups to maintain interest for all parties.

- Case studies

Case studies will be used to demonstrate the applicability and value of the SEEA. All members are expected to contribute concise case studies from their own experience. They may take the form of PowerPoint presentations, YouTube videos or written documents. These case studies can be shared on the SEEA knowledge base and incorporated into briefings and presentations by other members. Case studies will also be regularly included in the newsletter and can be used by countries to demonstrate the potential and value of the SEEA.

- Social Media

A social media strategy should be developed, primarily utilizing twitter, to promote upcoming meetings and conferences, current projects and keep abreast of SEEA related projects (i.e. natural capital accounting, etc.). Social media training should be provided for UNCEEA members and should cover how to use Twitter efficiently and effectively and when/how to re-tweet others. Once all SEEA members are confident in their skills to use Twitter (or similar platforms in different countries) in appropriate ways, it is expected that members will actively tweet from relevant events with key messages about the SEEA. Ideally, SEEA should have its own profile and hashtag.

6. Monitoring Progress

All UNCEEA members should monitor their progress to full commitment to the SEEA by each of their specific target groups. Progress will be measured both by UNCEEA members’ actions as well as the actions of target audiences. It is requested that members inform the Secretariat on a quarterly basis of any efforts that can be communicated to the rest of the UNCEEA, as well as to a broader audience.

Measures of progress include:

- Number of new countries taking up the SEEA and/or SEEA-EEA
- Number of SEEA workshops/trainings held and attendance of workshops/trainings
- Number of SEEA-related conferences, seminars and forums attended to promote the SEEA and audiences reached
- Number of SEEA messages tweeted and retweeted
- Amount of activity in the SEEA forum and amount of support provided by UNCEEA members
- Contributions to the newsletter and website content

- Amount of website traffic to the SEEA website
- Amount of website traffic to NSO pages on environmental-economic accounting
- Number of intergovernmental and high-level meetings attended to promote the SEEA and audiences reached
- Amount of progress made in putting accounts on agendas and compiling new accounts
- Amount of progress in promoting policy makers to use the SEEA in their analysis
- Number of peer-reviewed research/academic articles using the SEEA
- Number of indicators utilizing the SEEA