

United Nations Statistical Commission

Fifty-second session

1–3 and 5 March 2021

Item 3 (f) of the provisional agenda

Items for discussion and decision: environmental-economic accounting

Document E/CN.3/2021/10 – Report of the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting

Statement provided by:

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

Statement:

The ABS welcomes the Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEA) report. We support the adoption of the revised SEEA ecosystem accounting manual (SEEA EA) as a statistical standard.

The revised manual for SEEA EA is an important achievement. Ecosystem accounting has advanced since the release of the experimental SEEA EA manual in 2012. The document has captured many of these advances through an inclusive revision process.

We have supported the revisions process by:

- convening an Australian expert group on Environmental-Economic Accounting to support the revision process. The role of this group was to ensure the revised standards are appropriate for Australia; and,
- providing feedback through UNCEEA, the SEEA EA technical committee, as well as expert group workshops.

Valuation is a critical part of SEEA EA with differing opinions on treatment. Our view is that valuation as outlined in SEEA EA provides a reasonable conceptual framework that countries should use if they can. We recognise that compiling these accounts in practice will be challenging.

As with all statistical standards, it is likely that SEEA EA will need updating in future. We urge countries to work together and promptly resolve any elements that are not adopted as a statistical standard. The SEEA EA research agenda provides an opportunity to do this work.

We work closely with the Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (DAWE) in implementing the Common National Approach to Environment-Economic Accounting strategy for Australia. This strategy uses SEEA to standardise national environmental information. DAWE have provided feedback and support through the revision process, and agree with our position.

We also support the proposal to develop further guidance on Ocean accounting, which recognises both the unique technical challenges, and the global importance of the marine environment and economy. We acknowledge the University of New South Wales in Australia for their continuing contribution to the *Technical Guidance on Ocean Accounting for Sustainable Development* and the Global Ocean Accounting Partnership. DAWE have supported the development of the Ocean accounts through piloting Ocean accounts for the [Geographe Marine Park region](#) in Australia. DAWE are also working

United Nations Statistical Commission

Fifty-second session

1–3 and 5 March 2021

Item 3 (f) of the provisional agenda

Items for discussion and decision: environmental-economic accounting

with the Samoan government and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on Ocean waste accounts for Samoa. As a member of the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy, further guidance on Ocean accounting will support Australia to fulfill its commitments to develop a complete sequence of national Ocean accounts.

Submitted on:

2/19/2021