

Joint OECD/UNECE Seminar on Implementation of SEEA
3-4 October 2016, Geneva, Switzerland

CONCEPT NOTE

I. Introduction

The first Joint OECD/UNECE Seminar on the Implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) was held in Geneva on 14-15 October 2015. It was organised by an Organising Committee composed of experts from Australia, Canada, Kyrgyzstan, the Netherlands, Sweden, the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat), OECD and UNECE.

More than 80 participants representing 37 countries and several international organisations attended the Seminar. The participants benefited greatly from the opportunity to share knowledge and experience, and recommended that Joint OECD/UNECE Seminars on the Implementation of SEEA should continue to allow for exchange of practical experience, advancing the implementation of SEEA and discussing coordination issues among international agencies active in the SEEA work in the UNECE region.

II. Dates, venue and languages

The Seminar will start at 9:30 on Monday, 3 October 2016 and will finish at 17:30 on Tuesday, 4 October. It will take place in the Palais des Nations, Geneva. English-Russian interpretation will be provided.

III. Objective and target audience

The Seminar will build upon the outcomes and recommendations of the 2015 Seminar (see final report on <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=37910#>). It will also provide a forum to present and discuss the activities of international organisations related to the implementation and the use of SEEA, and contribute to their coordination.

As recommended by the participants of the previous event, the 2016 Seminar will focus on selected topics and allow for enough time for interaction between presenters and the audience.

The Seminar will consider the following topics: (i) relation between SEEA and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); (ii) applications of SEEA data and their communication; (iii) exchange of experience on the implementation of some SEEA modules. The seminar will address challenges and solutions for selected SEEA modules which the participants of the 2015 Seminar identified as high priority. This includes energy accounts, air emission accounts and accounts on environmental taxes and subsidies. More information is provided in section IV below.

The target audience is primarily producers of environmental-economic accounts, in particular the managers of environmental-economic account programs from National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and related agencies. Some national and international users will be invited to present the user perspective.

All participants are expected to have basic knowledge of SEEA, while recognising that the participating countries are at different levels of implementation and knowledge about SEEA and its applications.

Countries and organisations who would like to prepare papers or presentations for the seminar should contact Mr. Michael Nagy (michael.nagy@unece.org) by 30 May 2016.

IV. Sessions

The Seminar will include the following sessions:

1. Overview of the activities of international organisations, follow-up on the 2015 Seminar

This session will inform about current and planned activities related to SEEA implementation in the CES member countries. An inventory of international activities, prepared as requested by the 2015 Seminar, will be presented. Furthermore, the session will discuss an outline for a regional SEEA implementation strategy.

The outcome of the discussion will guide further work on SEEA implementation in the CES member countries.

2. SEEA and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In its decision 45/105, the UN Statistical Commission recognized SEEA as an important statistical framework for the SDG indicators. A side event on SEEA and SDGs was organised at the 46th UN Statistical Commission (see http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/statcom_2015/seminars/sdg-seea/default.html) and the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEA) presented a “Broad brush analysis of SEEA relevant SDG indicators” (see http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/ceea/documents/Broad%20Brush_7%20September.xlsx).

The session will inform about most recent developments of the SDG process and how SEEA can support SDG targets and indicators.

Members of the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDGs (IAEG-SDGs) and UNCEEA will be invited to the session.

3. Applications of SEEA data and their communication

Better knowledge is needed on how SEEA can be used in decision-making, policy review and formulation, analysis and research. This will also help in the communication of SEEA outside of NSOs.

In 2014 the white cover version of SEEA Applications and Extensions was published, while an UNCEEA expert group deals with communication and branding.

The session will present selected national examples, such as decomposition analysis and calculations of emissions of pollutants induced by final consumption. A particular focus will be on air emission accounts and energy accounts as they are important for SDG indicators and climate change related indicators. Another focus will be on the role of NSOs in analysing and modelling, and their cooperation with other agencies. Ways on how these applications can support the communication of SEEA-data may also be addressed.

The session will address questions which will be collected from registered participants before the Seminar.

4. Implementation of SEEA modules: Challenges and solutions

According to the outcomes of the Global Assessment of Environmental-Economic Accounting and Supporting Statistics 2014 (carried out by UNSD 2014), and the outcomes of the 2015 Joint OECD/UNECE Seminar on SEEA implementation, the following modules are among those with the highest priority for implementation: air emission accounts, energy accounts, water accounts, material flow accounts, environmental taxes and subsidies, environmental protection expenditures (EPEA), and environmental goods and services (EGSS).

This session will discuss challenges and solutions concerning the implementation of air emission accounts, energy accounts, environmental taxes and environmental subsidies. Together these modules provide an important information base for SDGs, climate change related indicators, monitoring the green economy and green growth indicators.

The session will focus on the exchange of practical experience and knowledge, based on questions which will be collected from registered participants before the Seminar.

5. Conclusions and recommendations for further work

The final session will conclude the seminar and identify follow-up actions. It will discuss and agree on recommendations for further advancing the implementation of SEEA in the CES member countries.