System of
Environmental
Economic
Accounting

Regional Training Programme on the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting for countries of Latin America and the Caribbean

concept note

The Regional Training Programme on the System of Environmental Economic Accounting 2012—Experimental Ecosystem Accounting (SEEA EEA) for countries of Latin America and the Caribbean is to be launched on in September 2018.

The programme consists of a self-paced online training with webinar sessions, an in-person workshop and follow-up country activities.

The e-learning phase can be accessed at the UNSD e-learning platform:
https://elearning-cms.unstats.un.org/

Meeting documents will be available on the UNSD/SEEA events page at:
https://seea.un.org/events/latin-american-and-caribbean-regional-training-workshop-brazil

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United Nations

Background

1. In March 2013, the United Nations Statistical Commission endorsed the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting 2012–Experimental Ecosystem Accounting (SEEA EEA) as the basis for commencing testing and further development of this new field of national accounting. The SEEA EEA was formally published in 2014 and constitutes an integrated statistical framework for organizing biophysical data, measuring ecosystem services, tracking changes in ecosystem assets and linking this information to economic and other human activity.

2. From a zero base in 2012, there are currently over 40 countries with ecosystem accounting programs of some type underway and there are applications in, and participation from, all sectors – public, private, academia and civil society. To support the uptake the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), UN Environment, and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) launched the project "Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services", funded by the European Union. It aims to build on SEEA EEA as the internationally agreed methodology and on the development of national competences, the project initiates pilot testing of the SEEA EEA in partner countries to advance the knowledge agenda on natural capital accounting.

3. The Training Programme will be organized as one of the activities of the above-mentioned EU-funded project and will be implemented in cooperation between the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the United Nations Environment and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN ECLAC). The Programme will contribute to building capacity on ecosystem accounting, which is one of the priority areas of the Statistical Conference of the Americas Working Group on Environmental Statistics, which is currently chaired by IBGE.

Objectives

4. Adoption and implementation of the SEEA EEA will require significant training of statistical and non-statistical professionals throughout the National Statistical Systems. This training will aim to strengthen capacities for the development of capacity in ecosystem accounting among professionals in the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and related line-ministries from the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

5. The objectives of the training are:
   - To help participants acquire knowledge and skills to deepen their understanding of the accounting principles and basic data needs for compiling ecosystem accounts and valuing ecosystem services based on the SEEA EEA;
   - To become acquainted with the various biophysical modeling tools and global data resources;
   - To facilitate experience sharing among participating countries; and
   - To support countries in setting up a strategy for the SEEA EEA implementation.

Organization

6. The training program is based on a blended learning format consisting of three phases: an online course, an in-person training (regional workshop) and a follow-up phase.

Phase I: Online course (from September to mid-November 2018)

7. The participants will attend a self-paced online course to assure a common level of technical knowledge on the SEEA EEA. The online course will be accessible in English and Spanish languages via the UNSD e-learning platform (https://elearning-cms.unstats.un.org/). The amount of time that participants will need to spend on the online course will be 6-8 hours per week, up to a total of 64 hours over 8 weeks. The online course is a prerequisite for participation in the in-person Workshop (Phase II).

8. The online course consists of the following eight modules:
   - Module 1: Key concepts on SEEA EEA
   - Module 2: Spatial units
   - Module 3: Ecosystem extent
   - Module 4: Ecosystem condition
   - Module 5: Carbon accounting
   - Module 6: Water accounting
   - Module 7: Biodiversity accounting
   - Module 8: Ecosystem services

9. In addition to the self-paced online modules, there will be several live online sessions (webinars) with SEEA EEA experts that will highlight the key points of the modules and provide examples on how the various accounts have been implemented in countries. These sessions will be held in English only.

Phase II: Regional Training Workshop, 21-23 November 2018 in Rio de Janeiro (by invitation only)

10. During the in-person training workshop, selected participants who completed the online training will further deepen their knowledge on the SEEA EEA, discuss the content of the online course, answer questions raised during the online course, and have an opportunity for hands-on training with data. The workshop will consist of three full days and will be hosted by IBGE in Rio de Janeiro. The in-person training will be held in English with Spanish and Portuguese interpretation.

11. As preparation to the training workshop, participants will be asked to familiarize themselves with QGIS by taking online tutorials. Computers with QGIS installed will be available, but participants are requested to bring their own laptops and install QGIS in advance. Participants will also be asked to share their national data (or links) in advance, in particular data on carbon (e.g. soil data or maps, biomass), and/or bring the data with them on a memory stick. Training data will also be prepared by the UN consultant.

12. During the 3-day training workshop participants will also discuss and share their experiences on the implementation of the SEEA EEA. The training may explore further technical issues related to the SEEA EEA, including ecosystem-related indicators for informing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators.

Phase III: Follow-up in countries (1st half of 2019)

13. Participants of the in-person training are expected to take follow-up actions after the workshop, such as (i) conducting a national training workshop on SEEA EEA; (ii) formulating a national strategy and work plan for the implementation of SEEA EEA; and (iii) if needed, requesting further technical assistance from the training organizers for the implementation of SEEA EEA.

Participants

14. The first phase of the training (the online course) can be attended by all that express an interest in attending the course. Countries are welcome to identify relevant staff from the NSOs as well as relevant line ministries who would benefit from the online training. For the in-person workshop (second phase), two participants will be invited from selected Latin American and Caribbean countries.

15. Nominated participants should ideally have experience in SEEA or related fields such as national accounts, environment statistics and geospatial information. Moreover, participants should have environmental-economic accounts as part of their professional responsibilities.