



## **Training Session on the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water (SEEAW) for the Arab Gulf Countries**

**August 25-28, 2008**

**UN House- Beirut-Lebanon**

### **Information note**

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) jointly with the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is organizing a training session on the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water (SEEAW) for the Arab Gulf countries which will be held in UN House, Beirut, during the period 25-28 August 2008.

#### **I- Background**

Water scarcity is a major challenge facing the Arabian Peninsula. The development of reliable, high quality, timely and comparable statistics on water and environment is very important to strengthen decision-making processes on the sustainable management of water resources and the economic analysis of water use. In this context, water accounting provides a robust framework for producing integrated hydrological and economic information on water for managers and decision-makers. This has been endorsed with a recommendation by ESCWA Statistical Committee in 2004 and the adoption of the System of Environmental and Economic Accounting for Water Resources (SEEAW) as an international statistical standard by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 2007.

ESCWA through the funded project “*Strengthening National Capacities in Environment Statistics, Indicators and Accounts in support of progress toward achieving the internationally agreed development goals in the ESCWA and ECLAC<sup>1</sup> Region 2007-2009*”, has planned activities to assist in enhancing the national capacities of Member States in environment statistics, indicator and accounts in order to integrate environmental concerns into economic development, thus supporting progress towards achieving environmental sustainability and related international agreed development goals member countries.

The United Nations Statistics Division, having developed the SEEAW are currently developing addition materials to assist countries implementing the new international standard and are providing expertise to assist in the training mainly through the manual on SEEAW (available from the UNSD website <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/SEEAWDraftManual.pdf>), and the Arabic translation of SEEAW Part1 by ESCWA, the International Recommendations on Water Statistics (IRES), and supporting exercises and examples for the training. Participants should download and read the relevant material prior to the training.

#### **II- Purpose of the training course**

ESCWA had implemented several activities in this project among which a subregional training for the Mashreq Arab countries in Amman in March 2008, the development of a network of experts and a docubase. This “Training Session on the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water (SEEAW) for the Arab Gulf Countries” aims at providing a sound knowledge on the compilation and practical and operational use of the SEEAW. It will draw on experiences from other Arab countries and from around the world. Countries should bring data to the training so that work on real water accounts, conforming to the SEEAW, can be undertaken at the workshop.

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<sup>1</sup> The Economic Commission For Latin America and The Caribbean (ECLAC)

This may enable pilot water accounts for some countries to be produced as well as strengthening national statistical capacities and enhancing sub-regional networking.

### **III- Tentative agenda of the meeting**

The course will be organised around plenary sessions and practical sessions (work group) and will focus on the SEEAW standards tables: physical water supply and use tables, emission accounts, hybrid supply and use tables, asset accounts.

Specifically, the course will address the following topics:

1. Compilation of data required by the System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting for Water (SEEAW); Water questionnaire;
2. Preparation of standard tables;
3. Practical and operational process of SEEAW;
4. Examples that apply SEEAW.

Participants are kindly asked to bring their national data so they can be used during the training course and countries can make a start on describing the stocks and flows and beginning populating the SEEAW. A list of the data that countries should bring and a provisional agenda are attached.

### **IV- Participation and registration**

The meeting will bring together experts (water statisticians, water managers and/or accountant) from National Statistical Offices, from Ministries of Environment and Water Authorities in the GCCs.

Lectures will be given by experts from the UN Statistics Division, UN-ESCWA and a consultant.

Nomination form to be filled by participants is attached.

### **V- Date and venue**

The meeting will be held on 25-28 August 2008 in Beirut, Lebanon.

More information on the venue of the meeting will be given later to the participants.

### **VI- Documentation, methods of work and official languages**

The working language is English and Arabic. Interpretation will be available for both languages.

Participants are kindly asked to prepare a short paper presenting their country situation in terms of water management, water statistics (data sources, availability) and water accounting (if relevant) and bring national data to the training session so that the group sessions can work with real data sets and problems, rather than data that are fictitious or from countries that already completed water accounts.

Data may be drawn from information published by National Statistics Offices, Water Departments, and Environment Departments, Agricultural Departments or other government sources. If possible data should be in the form of spreadsheets (e.g. Excel) and supplied in advance of the meeting. An Excel sheet sample will be sent by email to participants.

Supporting paper or country paper not exceeding 8 pages in length should be submitted in MS Word format (via e-mail) to Ms Wafa Aboul Hosn (email: [aboulhosn@un.org](mailto:aboulhosn@un.org)) or Ms. Yasmina Adra (email: [adra@un.org](mailto:adra@un.org)) by **July 25, 2008**.

PowerPoint and PDF presentations will be available for download at the ESCWA/Statistics Division website (<http://www.escwa.un.org/divisions/main.asp?division=sd>) and the project website (<http://www.escwa.un.org/esiap/>)

Delegates are encouraged to download the papers from the website and bring their copies to the meeting.

## **VII- Accommodation and travel arrangements**

The meeting will take place in UN ESCWA, Beirut, Lebanon.

**ESCWA** will cover the participation of two representatives: one from the statistical office and one from the ministry of water, tickets and DSA.

Nominated participants are requested to fill nomination form and send copies of their passport in order to finalize the administrative arrangements concerning their travel to

Ms Amal Nicola, email: [nicola@un.org](mailto:nicola@un.org) Telephone: +961-1-978-465

Ms Yasmina Adra, email: [adra@un.org](mailto:adra@un.org) Telephone: +961-1-978-430