



UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA
AND THE PACIFIC (ESCAP)

**Training Programme on Climate Change Related Statistics and the System of
Environmental-Economic Accounting for Pacific Island Countries**

17-21 September 2018

Nadi, Fiji

Concept Note

The need to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts is reaffirmed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 25 September 2015 and the Paris Agreement adopted in 2015, within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP), in December 2016, noted that the capacity of, especially the developing, countries of Asia and the Pacific to meet the statistics requirements for assessing progress on climate change action and impacts is limited. The Council, therefore, requested the development and delivery of training on data and statistics for the measurement of climate change.

Pacific island countries are amongst the highest at risk of experiencing disasters related to natural hazards, with the average annual cost of direct losses estimated at US\$284 million.¹ For some of the smaller economies this means the cost of a single event could exceed annual gross domestic product. Increased number and intensity of extreme weather events is widely considered as one of the consequences of climate change, these events include increasing incidents of saltwater intrusion, prolonged heavy rainfall and flooding, increased temperatures, droughts, and more violent tropical cyclones. Pacific Islands Forum leaders recognised² climate change as a significant threat to the lives and livelihoods, security, social development and wellbeing of the region.

Development of evidence-based sustainable development strategies and policies relies on available and reliable statistics. Mainstreaming the measurement of environment concerns as part of the regular data collection programs of national statistical offices would give policy makers the means with which to make balanced policy choices for sustainable development. Such measurements will also assist with monitoring national and international sustainable development initiatives, including the sustainable development goals (SDGs),

¹ World Bank, 2012, refer to <http://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2012/04/01/pacific-islands-disaster-risk-reduction-and-financing-in-the-pacific>

² Various Forum Leaders Communique – 2015-2017, refer to www.forumsec.org

the SAMOA Pathway for Small Island Developing States and the Pacific SDG Roadmap.

The System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) Central Framework allows for the measurement and a better understanding of environmental-economic interactions. The SEEA has also been identified as a useful framework for monitoring and reporting for the UN 2030 sustainable development agenda in support of inclusive sustainable development.

Production of SEEA in the Pacific is generally at early stages, with four countries completing experimental accounts while others have undertaken data and priority needs assessments³ which should lead to compilation of SEEA accounts. Many have yet to begin but remain interested, contingent upon resources and capacity.

To meet the needs and demands of member states in developing environment and climate change related statistics, ESCAP, through its Pacific Office, Statistics Division and the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific is planning to convene a training programme for Pacific countries.

The workshop will provide the opportunity for participants to learn basic concepts and frameworks, with hands-on sessions, on statistics related to climate change, with the overall aim to strengthen capacity to produce a set of statistics, including indicators, to inform climate change policy decisions at the national and international levels. More so, basic understanding of SEEA, noting the positive developments in the Pacific, and its application to climate change related interests will be covered.

Objectives

The objectives of the workshop include:

- Improved understanding of basic concepts and frameworks on statistics related to climate change and SEEA;
- To produce selected climate change-related indicators using national data, and acquire basic knowledge and skills on the SEEA accounting principles and identify basic data needs for compiling accounts;
- Facilitate experience sharing among participating countries, and to understand country plans, and identify opportunities for collaboration; and
- Promote the use of SEEA and climate change related statistics in policy formulation and monitoring.

Expected outputs

- Improved availability of climate change-related indicators in participating countries;
- Enhanced technical, including training, capacity in participating countries to produce climate change-related statistics, and understand basic concepts and applications of the SEEA Central Framework, as well as, data requirements for basic accounts which are of interest to the Pacific region; and

³ Refer to knowledge product titled *Implementation of SEEA in the Pacific: Achievements and Lessons*, <http://www.unescap.org/resources/implementation-system-environmental-economic-accounting-pacific-achievements-and-lessons>

- Recommendations for a regular ESCAP training programme on climate change-related and SEEA statistics.

Topics

The workshop will cover the following:

- Introduction - overview of integrated statistics, SEEA and the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES), Pacific regional climate change and SDG context in relation to environment statistics;
- Climate change related indicators (data sources and approaches and calculation and reporting);
- Natural disaster indicators and sources;
- Refresher on SEEA (data sources, compilation methods, approaches), covering land, solid waste, energy and water accounts;
- SEEA diagnostic tool and connecting with policy makers and users; and
- Individual/group research on national data sources, and application issues.

Participants

Target audience includes senior technical staff from national statistical offices, the national planning offices and/or government agencies using or providing environmental/ climate change related information for policy setting.

The following countries will be invited (two participants per country): Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Nauru, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. Funds permitting, other Pacific islands in the Pacific will be invited.

Representatives from other countries and relevant development organizations (such as Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, the University of the South Pacific, United Nations Environment Programme) attend on a self-funding basis.

The workshop is expected to be held over five days.

Pre-workshop requirements

Participants are expected to be familiar with the:

- SEEA: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/seea.asp>;
- FDES: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ENVIRONMENT/fdes.htm>;
- Pacific SDG indicators on environment issues; and
- CES Task Force set of 39 core climate change-related indicators: https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/documents/ece/ces/2017/CES_3-Climate_change_related_statistics_-_set_of_indicators_for_upload.pdf