# Report on country visit to the Philippines

## Discussion on the UN Global Manual on Material Flow Accounts

*20-22 November 2017*

## Purpose and scope

The Sustainable Development Goal (STG) 12 aims to reach by 2030 a sustainable consumption of resources. In order to achieve this ambitious target, countries need first and foremost be able to track and monitor their consumption of resources.

While currently the European Union is keeping record of all its material input and outputs through national statistical offices and an established methodology (the EUROSTAT Material Flow Accounting Manual), this accounting method is Europe-specific and requires large amount of data which is usually not available in many countries, especially developing ones.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has taken the initiative to create a global MFA manual with a scalable accounting methods, which is meant to be usable by every country in the world, regardless of the accounting capabilities of its respective national statistical office.

By the end of 2017, the first draft of the manual was finalised, and four pilot projects have been conducted: Laos, the Philippines, South Africa, and Chile. This report refers to the training conducted in Manila, the Philippines, from Monday 20 to Wednesday 22 November 2017. The main scopes of the country visit were:

1. To give an introduction on the conceptual foundation of MFA, as well as the processes and procedures undertaken in material flow accounting;
2. To familiarise participants with the data requirements of MFA and the material flow indicators that can be derived from these accounts;
3. To introduce the Global MFA Manual and collect feedback about its implementation in the Philippine setting;
4. To come up with a matrix of available data that will be used in generating material flow accounts, as well as to identify data gaps;
5. To establish a preliminary material flow accounts for the Philippines.

## Agenda

**Day 1, Monday, 20 November 2017:**

*09.30 – 12.30 Morning: presentations and discussion*

- Introduction to UN Environment's MFA and SDG agenda (UNEP Representative)
- Presentation of Environmental Statistics in the Philippines including experience with Material Flow Accounts (ONS Representative)
- General overview of Material Flow Accounts and relationship with existing statistics and datasets at the Philippines ONS

*14.00 – 17.00 Afternoon: hands-on session based on the draft manual and available national statistical datasets to establish a preliminary account and to provide feedback on practicability of the draft manual in the Philippine context*

- Domestic extraction of biomass accounts (requires representatives from environmental statistics, agricultural statistics, forestry statistics and fishery statistics)
- Domestic extraction of fossil fuels (requires representatives from environmental statistics and energy statistics)

**Day 2, Tuesday, 21 November 2017:**

*09.30 – 12.30 Morning: hands-on session based on the draft manual and available national statistical datasets to establish a preliminary account and to provide feedback on practicability of the draft manual in the Philippine context.*

- Domestic extraction of metal ores (requires representatives from environmental statistics and mining and querying statistics)
- Domestic extraction of non-metallic minerals (requires representatives from environmental statistics and mining and querying statistics)

*14.00 – 17.00 Afternoon: hands-on workshop based on the draft manual and available national statistical datasets to establish a preliminary account and to provide feedback on practicability of the draft manual in the Philippine context. Followed by presentation and discussion.*

- Imports and exports of materials (requires representatives from environmental statistics and trade statistics)
- Material flow accounting headline indicators and their policy use

**Day 3, Wednesday, 22 November 2017:**

*09.30 – 12.30 Morning: hands-on workshop based on the draft manual and available national statistical datasets to establish a preliminary account and to provide feedback on practicability of the draft manual in the Philippine context.*

- Emission and waste flows (requires representatives from environmental statistics)
- Establishing a material flow balance to create coherence across datasets (requires representatives from environmental statistics)

*14.00 – 17.00 Afternoon: presentation and roundtable discussion.*

- Material footprint accounts and material stock accounts (requires representatives from environmental statistics and input-output statistics)
- Assessment of overall progress during the workshop and discussion of open issues that require further support and capacity strengthening
- Assessment of preparedness of Philippines ONS to report progress for SDG targets 8.4 (Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation), 12.2 (By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources), and 12.5 (By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse)
- Wrap-up and feedback round

# Outcomes

This first attempt to introduce the MFA manual in the Philippines proved to be constructive for both Filipino statisticians and UN representatives. The first ones received an introduction to a methodology that is well established in Europe, and that will permit the country to achieve STG 12, while the latter

received important feedback on their work. The Philippines, until today, does not have an official account of the physical side of its economy, and this manual is an pivotal step towards that direction.

There were in total 34 participants to this training, mainly from the Philippine Statistical Agency (PSA) Central Office (18 persons), but there were also several participants from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) (12 persons), and the Department of Energy (DOE) (4 persons).

A general feeling of the participants is that creating a yearly material flow account is a fundamental addition to the ongoing efforts that the Philippines are undergoing for developing into a sustainable and modern country, but several key accounts to create a complete and sounds material flow report are sill missing. This was the first time for Filipino statisticians to experience the concepts and methods of Material Flow Analysis, and to fully comprehend its mechanics requires more time and dedication that a simple three-day workshop.

Each session (6 sessions in total) was marked with the introduction of one of the main chapters of the manual, followed by a hands-on workshop where statisticians were investigating data availability and trying to calculate the associated material flows. Certain categories, such as fossil energy carriers, resulted well covered, while others, e.g. non-metallic minerals, had nearly no data available.

With regard to the MFA Global Manual, the Filipino participants provided the following feedback, which is very valuable for improving the current version and proceed with a global implementation:

- Participants find that the manual is already very comprehensible, but the majority would have liked an explanation of the 2-digit categories, and possible some pictures to make them even more clear.
- Many also expressed the wish of practical examples, and perhaps an Excel file with a mock compilation which could be used as a guideline for the real dataset.
- We also were suggested to create an appendix or a practical application manual with step by step instructions (or in alternative some text boxes around the manual that would highlight things to be careful about).
- They also would appreciate that each section (DE, trade, etc.) would start with the generic picture of the MFA frame, highlighting what is being discussed.

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