



System of
Environmental
Economic
Accounting

Expert Group Meeting on SEEA-Related Indicators for the Global Biodiversity Framework

10 to 12 February 2026

UNEP-WCMC Offices, Cambridge, UK

Meeting Report



**United
Nations**



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1 SUMMARY

The [Expert Group Meeting on SEEA-related indicators for the Global Biodiversity Framework](#) was organized by the United Nations Statistics Division and hosted by UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge, UK, from 10 to 12 February 2026. The meeting was organized as part of the activities of the EU funded project [“SEEA-related indicators for the Global Biodiversity Framework \(GBF\)”](#). The main objective of the meeting was to discuss compilation issues for the two SEEA-related headline indicators of the GBF and ultimately contribute to the preparation of the compilation guidelines for these indicators.

The meeting brought together 20 experts on environmental-economic accounting and biodiversity assessment to discuss the draft operational guidelines that are being prepared by UNSD in support of the compilation of the two headline indicators of the GBF. Namely, indicators A.2 “Extent of natural ecosystems” and B.1 “Services provided by ecosystems”, which are based on the [SEEA Ecosystem Accounting \(SEEA EA\)](#). The agenda, background documents are available from the meeting website (<https://seea.un.org/events/expert-group-meeting-seea-related-indicators-global-biodiversity-framework>).

This report provides the background information for the meeting, the main outcome of the discussions and the next steps.

2 BACKGROUND

The [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework \(GBF\)](#) was adopted at the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP 15) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in December 2022. The GBF sets out an ambitious pathway to reach the global vision of a world living in harmony with nature by 2050. It comprises four actionable and measurable [goals](#) for 2050 and 23 [targets](#) for urgent action by 2030.

The GBF is supported by a [monitoring framework](#), agreed by the CBD Parties in 2022 to measure and monitor their progress towards these goals and targets in a transparent and results-oriented manner, including through a set of headline indicators on which all Parties to the CBD are obliged to report. The [metadata for two headline indicators](#) makes reference to the concepts and methods of the [SEEA Ecosystem Accounting \(SEEA EA\)](#) framework as the basis for calculating several of the indicators. These include the GBF Headline Indicators [A.2 “Extent of natural ecosystems”](#) and [B.1 “Services provided by ecosystems”](#) that are drawn from the Ecosystem Extent and Ecosystem Services Accounts described in the SEEA EA.

The project [“SEEA-related indicators for the Global Biodiversity Framework \(GBF\)”](#) was launched in 2024 to help countries compile these SEEA-related indicators and facilitate their reporting to the GBF. This European Union (EU) funded project is being implemented by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and will be delivered via four outputs: 1) Developing guidelines for compiling the GBF headline indicators A.2 and B.1; 2) Testing the guidelines in three project countries (i.e. Indonesia, Uganda, Colombia); 3) Developing global ecosystem services data in the [ARIES for SEEA platform](#); and, 4) Conducting capacity building activities.

The [Expert Group Meeting](#) discussed the draft operational guidelines that are being prepared by UNSD in support of the compilation of these two headline indicators of the

GBF. Participants included members of the Task Team convened under the auspices of the UN Technical Committee on SEEA Ecosystem Accounting to guide the development of compilation guidelines, as well as several additional experts. A list of participants is appended to this report.

3 MEETING OUTCOMES

Prior to the Expert Group Meeting, participants received a draft of the compilation guidelines for each headline indicator, including key proposals and questions to be discussed related to each section of the guidelines. During the Expert Group Meeting, participants formed two groups, one focusing on Indicator A.2 and the other on Indicator B.1, to work systematically through these proposals and questions. In addition, participants shared their current experience on compiling these indicators and relevant SEEA EA accounts, highlighting lessons and challenges.

The main outcomes with respect to further developing the compilation guidelines for the two headline indicators are summarized below.

3.1 Indicator A.2: Extent of Natural Ecosystems

- Greater emphasis is needed on the importance of disaggregating the overall headline indicator by Ecosystem Functional Groups (EFGs) in the Global Ecosystem Typology (GET), and by national ecosystem types at the national level, for it to play a meaningful role as part of the suite of ecosystem-related indicators of the GBF.
- The broad understanding of natural ecosystems of the metadata was confirmed. However, the discussion of semi-natural ecosystems should be reframed, with natural ecosystem types including modified and semi-natural ecosystems, as well as ecosystems in a range of condition states from pristine to poor condition.
- Definitions of natural ecosystem types and anthropogenic ecosystem types were refined, with clear criteria for identifying anthropogenic ecosystem types developed.
- Use of GET biomes and EFGs as a starting point for allocating ecosystem types to the broad categories of natural and anthropogenic was confirmed. The exception afforded to EFG T7.5 “Derived semi-natural pastures and old fields” was revisited, with a decision that the exception could apply to certain national ecosystem types within T7.5 rather than to the EFG as a whole.
- A series of examples of natural and anthropogenic ecosystem types was developed, helping to clarify borderline cases.
- It was agreed that inland and marine components of the indicator should be reported separately, regardless of whether ecosystem extent accounts at the national level are compiled for inland and marine areas separately or combined (which is up to countries to decide based on national context).
- It was agreed that the inland component of the indicator should include all transitional realms with a terrestrial and/or freshwater element. The boundary of the inland area should thus preferably be an ecological boundary rather than an administrative boundary.
- Clarity was reached on linear ecosystems mapped only as one-dimensional features, which may be included in a complementary national indicator based on length rather than area.

- It was agreed that the marine component of the indicator should cover a country's whole Exclusive Economic Zone, including deep sea ecosystems.
- A national ecosystem map (i.e. a classification of all ecosystem types occurring in a country and a spatial dataset representing their geographic distribution at a suitable baseline date) was confirmed as the foundational national dataset required for the indicator. The map must be collectively exhaustive for a country (i.e., wall-to-wall) rather than omitting some ecosystem types within a country.
- There was agreement that time series land cover/land use datasets may be useful for measuring conversion of natural to anthropogenic ecosystem types in inland areas, especially when enhanced with various types of contextual data. However, it should not be assumed that everything that looks natural based on land cover data is actually natural.
- There was agreement that global datasets representing ecosystem types or EFGs can be useful a) as inputs to the development of a national ecosystem map, and/or b) as an interim alternative in the absence of an existing national ecosystem map. In each case the quality of the dataset should be carefully assessed by national experts to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- The minimum option for compiling the indicator set out in the draft guidelines should be reframed as an interim option as it provides only the basic indicator without the possibility of disaggregation to EFGs or national ecosystem types, which is fundamental to the usefulness of the indicator.
- Two possible approaches were confirmed for translating an ecosystem extent account based on national ecosystem types to EFGs: a) proportional-fit approach, and b) best-fit approach. It was agreed that the guidelines should not be prescriptive about which approach a country should use, as a range of contextual factors will determine which is more appropriate. Countries could test both approaches and assess which gives a result that is closest to that based on national ecosystem types.

3.2 Indicator B.1: Provision of Ecosystem Services

- The biodiversity focus and link to human well-being in the indicator needs to be strengthened in the guidelines.
- It was noted that an increase or decrease in ecosystem services flows can take place for a range of reasons. Clear caveats are needed on interpretation of the indicator when changes in ecosystem service flows are driven by changes in the enabling factors associated with their use (e.g., changes in pollution pressures and user populations), rather than loss of biodiversity underpinning the supply of ecosystem services.
- Services supplied by anthropogenic ecosystems that require high levels of human input should be excluded from the indicator (e.g., crop provisioning services from intensive agriculture). However, it is important that services supplied by natural elements in anthropogenic ecosystems can be captured (e.g., recreation-related ecosystem services from urban green space).
- The Global Climate Regulation Service should be included in the indicator by all countries as it is the only ecosystem service that is used by the global population.
- Ecosystem services with direct links to human health protection and climate change adaptation should be prioritized for inclusion in the indicator.

- Guidance should be provided in the guidelines on assessing the sustainability of ecosystem services flows based on comparing the actual supply and use of ecosystem services against an estimated maximum sustainable supply. This should be presented in terms of a ratio of these estimates, where maximum sustainable supply can be derived from modelled values of maximum sustainable yields, pollution thresholds or expert driven estimates.
- Datasets on ecosystem services used to compile the indicator must represent actual supply and use and provide data for at least two points in time.
- Countries should use their own data quality assurance processes and standards for ecosystem services datasets. However, these should reflect the Data Quality Assurance Frameworks and Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.
- Global datasets should be used by countries as an interim measure to fill gaps in national datasets on ecosystem services. These data could include global databases; Earth Observation data and derived data from ecosystem service modeling platforms and other sources.
- Countries should assess the suitability of global data for national use. This should include:
 - Checking how the data has been produced and what data products feed into any models with national experts with relevant knowledge.
 - Reviewing if global data has been “ground-truthed” in the relevant global region and/or country.
 - Undertaking national ground truthing of global datasets, including semi-quantitative assessment (e.g., comparing marginal values for biomass yield per hectare) and comparing with partial or proxy national data on absolute values and trends in ecosystem services.
- Countries should be encouraged to compile the full set of ecosystem service supply and use tables. If this is not possible a basic account of ecosystem service flows disaggregated by ecosystem type should be compiled. If this is not possible a bare minimum account of ecosystem service flows supplied by all ecosystems in aggregate should be compiled. In this scenario, investing effort in developing the bare minimum account to include more services, rather than in further disaggregation by ecosystem type of the services already included, is encouraged.

4 NEXT STEPS

Drawing on the rich discussions at the meeting, the draft compilation guidelines for the two indicators will be revised and further tested and refined with the three project countries and in consultation with relevant stakeholders in the statistical and biodiversity communities. The aim is to finalize the guidelines by the end of the year.

5 PARTICIPANTS LIST

- Efi Yuliani (BPS-Statistics Indonesia)
- Megan Critchley (Basque Centre for Climate Change)
- Jane Turpie (Anchor Environmental Consultants)
- Falko Buschke (GEO Global Ecosystem Atlas)
- Kwame Fredua (Ghana Environmental Protection Agency)
- Jacob Bedford (UNEP-WCMC)
- Flavio Affinito (Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity)
- Anne-Gaelle Ausseil (Ministry for Environment, New Zealand)
- Diego Andres Cobaleda Martinez (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, DANE)
- Hilda Arinaitwe (Uganda Bureau of Statistics)*
- Ben Shaw (University of Melbourne)
- Emily Nicholson (University of Melbourne)
- Mayra Zurbaran (Joint Research Centre, European Commission)
- Jan-Erik Petersen (European Environment Agency)
- Patrick Bogaart (Statistics Netherlands, CBS)*
- Mandy Driver (UNSD Consultant)
- Bruno Smets (Vito Remote Sensing)
- Jessica Andrews (Statistics Canada)
- Steven King (UNSD)
- Ilaria Di Matteo (UNSD)

* Participated online