Virtual Expert Forum on SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting 2020

Session 1: Ecosystem extent and condition

23-24 June 2020

7:00-10:00 EST (NY) time

online

Draft agenda

Version: 17 June 2020

Day 1: Tuesday, 23 June 2020

[all EST (NY) times]

7:00-7:30	**Introduction and framing of the discussion**

Welcome address, outline the objectives of the meeting and icebreaker.

Welcome messages:
- Bert Kroese, Chair of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting and Deputy Director General Statistics Netherlands (TBC)
- Stefan Schweinfest, Director, United Nations Statistics Division/DESA

Objectives of the meeting and icebreaker – Pritom Phookun, meeting facilitator
- Rules of engagement
- Familiarization of process of the workshop
- Icebreaker

7:30-8:00	**Overview of progress on ecosystem extent and condition and outstanding methodological issues**

Session objective: Inform participants of the overall progress on the SEEA EEA revision in the area of ecosystem extent and condition, ensure understanding of the basic content of Chapters 3-5, and outline the outstanding issues emanating from the global consultation.

Session structure:
- 7:30-7:45: Presentation on the Overview of progress on ecosystem extent and condition and outstanding methodological issues Introduction on process, principles and outcomes of the testing of ecosystem extent and condition – Carl Obst, UNSD consultant
- 7:45-8:00: Q&A and general discussion

8:00-10:00	**Introduction to testing on ecosystem extent and condition**

Session objective: Present and discuss the results of testing on ecosystem extent and condition, and identify bottlenecks of the ecosystem extent and condition approaches as outlined for the revised SEEA EEA.

Session structure:
- 8:00-8:30: Introduction on process, principles and outcomes of the testing of ecosystem extent and condition. Presentation by Sjoerd Schenau (Statistics Netherlands) and Joachim Maes (Joint Research Centre, European Commission), followed by short Q&A
- 8:30-9:30: Breakout group discussions on the outcomes of the ecosystem extent and condition testing by countries

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> a. Country presentation on testing results
> b. Moderated discussion on predefined questions aiming to identify ways to overcome challenges identified in testing

- 9:30-10:00: Plenary debrief where each moderator notes five (5) key points from the discussion in a couple of minutes

Breakout groups:

#	Country	Spatial units	Condition
1	Australia	X	X
2	Brazil	X	
3	Canada	X	
4	Estonia	X	
5	India	X	X
6	Mexico	X	X
7	Netherlands	X	
8	Norway		X
9	South Africa	X	X
10	Spain	X	X

Breakout rules:
- Participants will be randomly assigned to breakouts with the exception of presenters and notetakers
- The moderator should make one introductory presentation (consolidated for both extent and condition) on his or her country experience with the testing using the below suggested structure
- Moderator to moderate the discussion and prioritize questions suggested below
- Notetaker to assist the moderator in moderating the discussion and taking notes during the discussion
- The notetaker and moderator to capture the outcomes of each discussion in a power point slide to be sent to UNSD (seea@un.org) at the end of the breakout for the plenary debrief

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Day 2: Wednesday, 24 June 2020

[all EST (NY) times]

7:00-7:15   Introduction to the day

Reflections from Day 1 and quick intro on the structure of Day 2.

7:15-7:45   Compiling ecosystem extent and condition accounts using spatial data platforms, ARIES in particular

Session objective: Inform participants on the potential of spatial data platforms to support, in particular, how can ARIES support compilation of ecosystem extent and condition accounts and provide input for future development of ARIES.

Session structure:
- 7:15-7:30: Presentation on using ARIES to support compilation of ecosystem extent and condition accounts – Ken Bagstad, US Geological Survey
- 7:30-7:45: Q&A and general discussion

7:45-9:55   Discussion on outstanding technical issues related to ecosystem extent and condition

Session objective: Provide suggestions and prioritize approaches to resolving on the outstanding issues identified through the first global consultation on chapters 3-5.

Session structure:
- 7:45-8:00: Introduction to the issues to be discussed in breakouts – Carl Obst, UNSD consultant
- 8:00-8:45: Round 1 of breakout discussions
- 8:45-9:30: Round 2 of breakout discussions
- 9:30-9:55: Plenary debrief where each moderator notes five (5) key points from the discussion in a couple of minutes

Description of issues for discussion:

1. Condition indicators
Do we need a minimum list with condition indicators? Who develops it? What are the criteria for it (e.g. one indicator per ECT condition category)?
2. Reference levels and conditions
Is it possible to find a global consensus on reference conditions? If not, what are the alternatives?   Can we propose both the natural state as reference condition and an anthropogenic reference where natural is no longer possible? If so, in what contexts should this be applied and what are the implications for aggregation?
3. Principles of aggregation

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The current aggregation is a fairly simple equal weight aggregation per ecosystem condition variable followed by a second aggregation over the different sub-indices. What alternatives can be considered? How do weighting considerations vary within EA (i.e. across different variables and indicators), across EA of the same ET, and across ET? What additional material should be included in the SEEA EEA?

4. Ecosystem conversions

Discussion on the basis of a worked out example of ecosystem conversion. How can the combined presentation of extent and condition accounts provide insights in changes in condition due to conversions? What are the challenges?

5. Mosaic landscapes

Mosaic landscapes are important, especially from a condition perspective: the functioning of a given ecosystem depends on its interactions with neighbouring ecosystems of a different type. How can we best deal with mosaics in the ecosystem classification and in particular with respect to the IUCN-GET? What are the links to the treatment of linear features?

6. Socio-economic factors

Certain socio-economic factors (e.g. management and ownership) could (in some cases) be important factors in the delineation and classification of ecosystem assets. This may in particular be important for urban and agricultural ecosystems. How can we best reflect this in the delineation of EA? Are more classes needed in the ecosystem type classification to recognise the variation?

7. Integration with land accounts

In the SEEA CF there are already land cover and land use accounts. How can we best integrate (or at least harmonize) these different accounts with the SEEA EEA extent account?

8. Conceptual and methodological relationship between BSUs, EAs and ETs

In some cases, data are compiled at the basic spatial unit (BSU) or ecosystem type (ET) level but not at the ecosystem asset level. Thus, while in concept the ET level suggests the need to aggregate across EAs of that type (upscaling), in reality information on EAs is either obtained by aggregating BSU level data or downscaling ET characteristics to the EA level. The questions here are what should be the focus of measurement, what level of data is relevant for decision making, and how should the relationships between BSU, EA and ET be described?

Group and issue pairing:

Group #	Issue for Round 1	Issue for Round 2
Group 1	1. Condition indicators	2. Reference conditions
Group 2	2. Reference conditions	3. Principles of aggregation
Group 3	3. Principles of aggregation	6. Socio-economic factors
Group 4	4. Ecosystem conversions	5. Mosaic landscapes
Group 5	5. Mosaic landscapes	1. Condition indicators
Group 6	6. Socio-economic factors	7. Integration with land accounts
Group 7	7. Integration with land accounts	8. Conceptual and methodological relationship between BSUs, EAs and ETs

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Group 8	8. Conceptual and methodological relationship between BSUs, EAs and ETs	4. Ecosystem conversions	6

Breakout rules:

- Participants to be grouped based on their preferences (if indicated) and will stay in the same group for both rounds of discussion
- Moderator and notetaker will be moved between rounds
- Moderator should make a short introduction to the issue and moderate the discussion using the guiding questions above
- The moderator and notetaker to capture the outcomes of each discussion in a power point slide to be sent to UNSD (seea@un.org) at the end of the breakout for the plenary debrief

9:55-10:00   Closing

Closing and summary of next steps – Alessandra Alfieri, UNSD