



United Nations



System of  
Environmental  
Economic  
Accounting

# The SEEA at a Glance

Governments rely on an array of measures to track national progress and inform decision making. Gross domestic product (GDP) provides insight into the performance of the economy, census data reveals changing demographic patterns, and national household surveys show how much progress is being made toward achieving important social goals, to name just a few examples. All these indicators rest on the foundation of agreed-upon frameworks that spell out procedures for rigorous collection and analysis of data.

The System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) was developed to provide a similar framework for measuring the links between the environment and economic and societal well-being. Adopted as an international statistical standard by the United Nations Statistical Commission, the SEEA brings together economic and environmental information using an agreed-upon set of standard concepts, definitions, classifications, accounting rules and tables to produce internationally comparable statistics.

The SEEA provides frameworks for producing accounts in **eight thematic areas**:



material flows



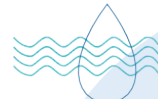
agriculture, forests, and fisheries



environmental activities



land



water



air emissions



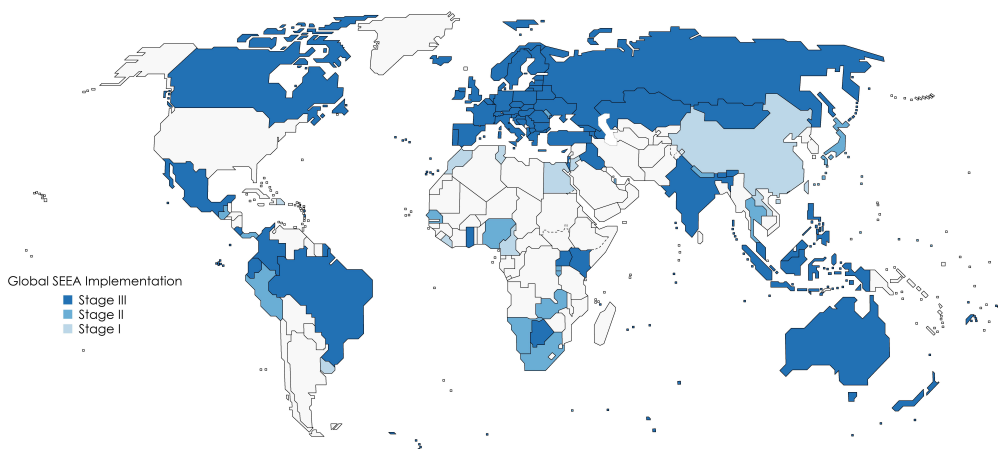
ecosystems and biodiversity



energy

## SEEA Around the World

Global SEEA Implementation



over  
**90**

Countries are  
compiling SEEA  
Accounts

## The SEEA consists of two parts:

### SEEA Central Framework

The SEEA Central Framework (SEEA CF) was adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission as the first international standard for environmental-economic accounting in 2012. The Central Framework looks at individual environmental assets, such as water, energy, forests and fisheries, resources and how those assets are extracted from the environment, used within the economy and returned back to the environment in the form of emissions into air, water and waste.

### SEEA Ecosystem Accounting

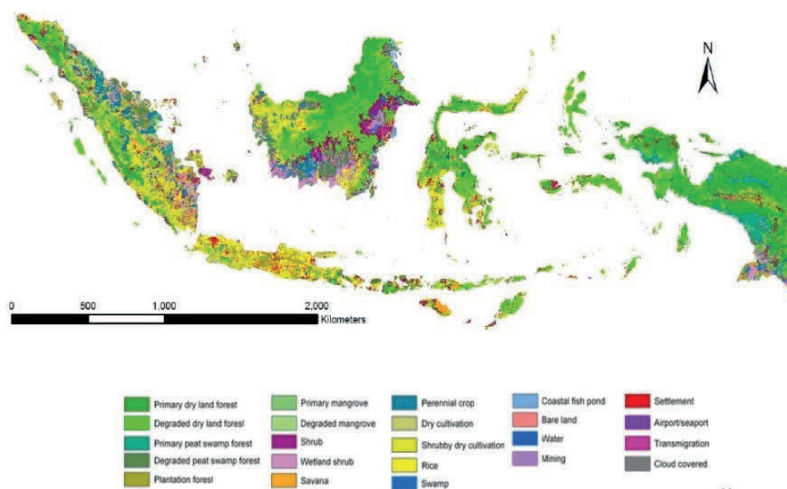
The SEEA Ecosystem Accounting (SEEA EA), adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 2021, complements the SEEA CF and represents a coherent accounting approach to the measurement of ecosystems. Ecosystem accounts enable the presentation of data and indicators of the level and value of ecosystem extent, ecosystem condition and ecosystem services in both physical and monetary terms in a spatially explicit way.

Finally, the SEEA Applications and Extensions illustrates to compilers and users of SEEA Central Framework based accounts how the information can be used in analysis and in decisions.

### SEEA in Action

SEEA land accounts are helping Indonesia address a variety of policy demands—from climate change to land management. To create land accounts for 2009 and 2014, Indonesia produced maps to spatially delineate the occurrence of different types of land cover and ecosystems over time. The accounts revealed that the increase in the amount of land dedicated to economic use (mainly agriculture) between 2009-2014 came at the expense of a loss of nearly two million hectares of forest cover. The results have important implications for SDG 15: Life on Land and land conversion planning, as well as Indonesia's commitments to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+).

(Sources: Medrilzam and Buyung Airlangga, presentation to Policy Forum on Natural Capital Accounting for Better Policy Decisions, November 2016; Tasriah. 2016.)



**United Nations**



System of  
Environmental  
Economic  
Accounting

Comments and questions are welcome.

Please contact us at: United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), Environmental Economic Accounts Section, New York, USA

The System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) is an international statistical standard that uses a systems approach to bring together economic and environmental information to measure the contribution of the environment to the economy and the impact of the economy on the environment. Environmental accounts are an extension to the System of National Accounts (SNA) and facilitate the development of indicators and analysis on the economy-environment nexus.