



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
STATISTICS DIVISION
UNITED NATIONS



System of
Environmental
Economic
Accounting

System of Environmental-Economic Accounting 2012 – Experimental Ecosystem Accounting Revision

First Global Consultation on:

Chapter 3: Spatial units for Ecosystem Accounting

Chapter 4: Accounting for Ecosystem Extent

Chapter 5: Accounting for Ecosystem Condition

Comments Form

Deadline for responses: 30 April 2020

Send responses to: seea@un.org

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The comment form has been designed to facilitate the analysis of comments. There are nine guiding questions in the form, please respond to the questions in the indicated boxes below. To submit responses please save this document and send it as an attachment to the following e-mail address: seea@un.org.

All documents can be also found on the SEEA EEA Revision website at:
<https://seea.un.org/content/seea-experimental-ecosystem-accounting-revision>

In case you have any questions or have issues with accessing the documents, please contact us at seea@un.org

Question 1: Do you have any comments on the definition and description of ecosystem assets and ecosystem accounting areas and the associated measurement boundaries and treatments?

We believe that description of economic assets and ecosystem accounting areas are exhaustive and sufficient. However, we have some short comments on specific paragraphs:

- *paragraph 3.23; subparagraph iv.:* it seems that the second sentence of the paragraph refers to the “same area” (as the same ecologic asset) and not to “any area” (as it is written). One ecologic asset (EA) can consist of only one ecologic type (ET). However it is not true, that “...any area on the land or the seafloor, or any horizontal depth layer in the ocean, should be occupied by one and only one ecosystem type.«, since it can indeed be occupied by many ETs. It is not clear from the paragraph to what this “any area” refers to.
- *paragraph 3.37:* some subterranean systems such as caves, underground streams and rivers can be very important in some regions across the globe with predominantly karst features (see Kras region in Slovenia, Siberian karst in Altai, Hunan karst in China etc.). Such underground systems can be considered as important ecosystem “areas” with developed flora and fauna. In this regard we do not see it necessary that subterranean ecosystems should be excluded from the scope for purposes of accounting for ecosystem extent.

Question 2. Do you have any comments on the use of the IUCN Global Ecosystem Typology as the SEEA Ecosystem Type Reference Classification?

We support and welcome the proposed use of IUCN Global Ecosystem Typology as the SEEA Ecosystem Type Reference Classification. We have no other comments on this topic.

Question 3. Do you have any comments on the recording of changes in ecosystem extent and ecosystem condition, including the recording of ecosystem conversions, as described in chapters 4 and 5?

We have only short remark on differentiation of managed and natural expansion/regression changes in ecosystem extent; the fact is, that in some cases such differentiation is rather difficult (e.g. unknown and undefined reasons for expansion/regression because of lack of available data or other reasons, “marginal cases” such as effects of acid rain that are on one hand natural, but have direct and visible anthropogenic causes etc.). Such issues with unknown reasons for expansion/regression in ecosystem extent and issues with marginal cases should be described more in detail with proposed solutions.

Question 4. Do you have any comments on the three-stage approach to accounting for ecosystem condition, including the aggregation of condition variables and indicators?

We generally support the proposed three-stage approach to accounting for ecosystem condition. We also welcome the proposed use of only few (selected) condition variables that are recognized (by data compilers) as the most relevant for each ET. This on one hand gives data compilers more time to focus on only relevant variables and on the other hand ensures quality and clear (non-complex) data output.

Question 5. Do you have any comments on the description and application of the concept of reference condition and the use of both natural and anthropogenic reference conditions in accounting for ecosystem condition?

Special concern should be applied to use of similar approaches of defining (measuring) reference conditions, since (as described in paragraph 5.34) reporting countries and regions could measure ecosystem condition using a national or regionally agreed set of reference conditions. This could potentially lead to different methodological approaches. Proper and coherent methodological approaches allowing as broader use as possible, using well defined set of rules, should be established within SEEA EEA in order to ensure comparable methodological practices and fully comparable results. Listing good practices (country examples) and ensuring well-trained and responsive people (i.e. available for country queries) in the key places of the participating international organizations can make a big contribution to this matter.

Question 6. Do you have any comments on Ecosystem Condition Typology for organising characteristics, data and indicators about ecosystem condition?

We generally support and welcome well defined Ecosystem Condition Typology intended for organizing characteristics, data and indicators about ecosystem condition. We have no further comments on this topic.

Question 7. Do you have any other comments on Chapter 3?

We welcome some suggestions on data sources for land cover and land use (such as in paragraph 3.64), however we would generally expect listing some more suggestions on possible data sources and cases of good practices (country examples) on this matter. This could be included in annexes in relevant chapters, if possible (this remark applies to all chapters).

Question 8. Do you have any other comments on Chapter 4?

No, one remark on the content of this chapter is already given under Question 3.

Question 9. Do you have any other comments on Chapter 5?

No, some remarks on the content of this chapter are already given under questions 4, 5 and 6.