



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 6: Ecosystem services concepts for accounting

Chapter 7: Accounting for ecosystem services in physical terms

Comments Form

Deadline for responses: 20 August 2020

Send responses to: seea@un.org

Name:	Steven King
Organization & country:	UNEP-WCMC

The comment form has been designed to facilitate the analysis of comments. There are six 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

Questions related to Chapter 6

Question 1: Do you have comments on the concepts and definitions for ecosystem services, benefits and associated components of the ecosystem accounting framework?

No – this is pretty clear

Question 2. Do you have comments on the content and descriptions in the reference list of selected ecosystem services?

In the reference list the definition of regulating services doesn't seem quite right. Effectively this is the way ecosystems moderate conditions to make life nicer for us humans. At the moment we could have the local climate regulation in some remote part of Siberia.

'Nursery population and habitat maintenance services' -> gene pool protection is highlighted but it seems it could also include options for economic units to benefit from species and genetic material in the future.

Para 6.72 identifies maintenance of ecosystem service options as a cultural ecosystem service but this does not feature in Table 6.2. I would like to see it included in this list, whilst there are clearly issues with its measurement as a service flow I think it would avoid a conflation with the above service. There is a strong acknowledgement of it in the IPBES report and indicators can be derived to represent it. In this way, it is quite similar to ecosystem and species appreciation services (i.e., the delivery of these services are likely to be linked to indicators of biodiversity or species / ecosystem stocks). I like Para 6.74

Question 3. Do you agree with the proposed treatments for selected ecosystem services described in Section 6.4 for biomass provisioning services, global climate regulation services, cultural services, water supply and abiotic flows?

Agree with biomass.

Global climate regulation – there seems a strong focus on stocks and changes in carbon stocks. However, I understand that carbon flux towers are also used to measure carbon flows / exchanges in ecosystems - so this may be important to highlight

Agree with water supply

Generally, agree with abiotic flows. Good to see a clarification on peat. Just a bit more clarity on whether water transport is an ecosystem service would be best, it is implicit in the unique example but it would be good to explicit rule out sea and lake transport and transport in highly modified rivers (e.g., with locks and weirs to maintain water levels to support transport). Para 6.89 provides a useful clarification with respect to sink services. However, the proposed convention would seem to hold for sink services. If the action is to dump pollutants in the river and this creates an economic benefit in terms of avoided waste management fees would such an economic unit not be using the sink service to create a benefit? This seems to also reflect the suggested recording of an abiotic flow from the economy to the atmosphere of GHGs (anyway is this not already covered in the SEEA CF?)

Question 4. Do you have any other comments on Chapter 6?

Para 6.15, pp.3. The public versus private nature is not that explicit in the bullets. In what sense are these benefits non-rival and non-excludable. For example, bullet ii – do capture fisheries or open access grazing fit this situation? At the moment it is presented as a positive externality.

I like Para 6.18 -> very helpful

Questions related to Chapter 7

Question 5. Do you have comments on the proposed recording approaches for ecosystem services supply and use tables described in section 7.2?

It is generally well presented and clear. I think a bit more clarity on what imported ecosystem services are would be helpful. The import / export section is useful here -> basically a benefit (e.g., harvested fish) enters the economy in a country and is imported by another country. So does not enter into the ecosystem service accounts. However, a juvenile Salmonid may come from an upstream spawning area, migrate downstream and be caught in the sea of another country and this would enter the ecosystem service account as an imported nursery ecosystem service.

Question 6. Do you have any other comments on Chapter 7?

Nope!