



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 have a following remark regarding definitions (probably to the Ecosystem services accounts or Ecosystem monetary asset accounts): we cannot take these accounts as an absolute value, while we still cannot calculate them. In practice this might lead to the outcome, that nature/ecosystems will be commodified.

We would like to point out from the perspective of nature protection experts that also the inner value (intrinsic value) of the nature should be considered, which is not possible to assess and evaluate from the financial point of view (this value is endless, because without nature/ecosystems also humans would never be here...).

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

As mentioned below (comments on chapter 3), in the EU the EUNIS classification is applied, so we think that it would be useful to include this classification in chapter 3. Or at least setting up an automatic conversion key between these two classifications would be useful.

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 are concerned that annual recording of changes would not be possible. For more see our comments on chapter 5.

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?

Proposed number of condition variables and indicators are rather detailed. In our opinion it will not be possible to implement this approach, it seems unrealistic. For more see our comments on chapter 5.

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?

No comments.

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

How the indicators for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are/will be used as indicators for status of species and habitats of nature and biodiversity protection, since these are crucial for these purposes.

It has to be taken into account that those needs to be harmonised also with the ecosystem accounting purposes.

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

Comments on Chapter 3:

- In principle, the methodology suggests to be used for the basic units of ecosystems, which will be in practice spatially limited. It is recommended to prepare tables with sizes, increases and decreases of specific ecosystems, which is very demanding process. In general, we agree with this approach, since up till now we have been building our baseline according to it, however there are high limitations in the process of verification in the field.
- Partially we see the problem in that the SEEA ecosystem types are based on IUCN categorization because we use the EUNIS classification. So we propose that for the EU countries, it is possible to use also EUNIS classification. Conversion to IUCN is possible, but it might create mistakes.
- It is not clear from the document how the elements should be prepared on annual basis. In our opinion, the only way would be to use the satellite pictures, probably from Copernicus, but we do not see any suggestion on this in the document. It is difficult to imagine how it would be possible to evaluate increases and decreases in tables on annual basis. So we think that description of methodology how this should be done should be included in the chapter. That way it will be harmonised and also rewrite data sets, which will be used and clarify, if it will be assessed from the satellite pictures.

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

We have no specific comments on **Chapter 4**.

However we would like to point out that the table for Ecosystem extent account would be difficult to complete, since at present or in near future the concrete data necessary for compilation of the table will not be available. Again, we think the main source of information should be the satellite pictures and some automatic comparison of changes and their automatic assessment, which should be more described in chapters.

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

Comment on Chapter 5:

- We think that the application of recommended method would be very problematic, since the system suggests for each ecosystem to measure several indicators on annual basis. In our opinion this is not realistic, and this comprehensive approach is not possible to apply in practice at national level. Within our capabilities is only simplified approach taking into account only selected parameters (for example for forest management in forests, age of forests, for non-forest habitats secondary succession), which could be between years evaluated on the basis of satellite pictures, although it is a complex and difficult task.