



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS  
STATISTICS DIVISION  
UNITED NATIONS



System of  
Environmental  
Economic  
Accounting

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## 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](mailto:seea@un.org)**

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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](mailto: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](mailto: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?**

*A clear definition on biodiversity in the context of ecosystem accounting is missing (should it be understood as condition/asset?)*

*About the treatment of ecosystem disservices, these should not be accounted when derived from anthropogenic disturbances to natural systems, e.g. flooding as a consequence of climate change and greenhouse gases emissions.*

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

*We agree with the classification used in the reference list. Other classifications attempt to separate regulating and supporting services, but they are intertwined in such way that it is better to keep them under the same category.*

**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?**

*Section 6.4.4 should have a reference to spatial units and ecosystem classification, indicating whether the water supply service is attributed to the ecosystem “water body” or to the ecosystem where water bodies are located (e.g. an aquifer under a forest).*

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

*About the logic chain in Annex 6.1., it would be helpful to include SNA institutional sectors as users.*

**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 essential to register the use of ecosystem services from outside the ecosystem accounting area, for example by non-resident units. This record is essential to have a complete idea of the use of the service, especially in services such as sequestration and storage of coal, which benefits both residents of the accounting area and non-residents. Using the non-residents category is also useful when recording exports of ecosystem services, for example tourism and nature-based recreation service.

The column assigned with the category is also essential when recording the use of ecosystem services. This is especially important when non-SNA benefits that can be assigned to households are recorded, while SNA benefits are assigned to other economic units. We agree that it can be very useful to disaggregate the category “households” to distinguish different types of households according to income and to have more details on the distribution of the use of ecosystem services.

In this section it is mentioned that abiotic flows can be included, mainly wind and solar energy. However, it is especially complex to attribute these types of services to a particular type of ecosystem, thus breaking the coherence of the ecosystem accounts. We consider that for the moment it is not necessary to include these types of flows.

On the other hand, in international discussions it has not yet been accepted that all countries adopt the IUCN classification, so the types of ecosystems should be presented as a proposal, and that each country should adapt it according to its needs.

Regarding the selected ecosystem services, we agree to group them into provisioning services, regulatory services and cultural services, however the opening should be according to the availability of information in each country.

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

When measuring and accounting for the different ecosystem services, it is necessary to take into account the final benefit that is generated, since the valuation method that will be used and the interpretation of the results obtained will depend on that. For example, the carbon sequestration and storage service can have two types of benefits: regulation of temperature and reduction of adverse effects on people's health. In the first case, the social cost of carbon can be used to value the service, while in the second case the method of costs avoided in terms of health can be used.

In addition, it is necessary to take into account that the disaggregation of the units that are presented in the supply and use tables in physical units must correspond to the economic units that are considered when registering the tables in monetary units, since this will guarantee the sequence and harmonization of the accounts.