



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

Name:	Silvia Cerilli, Giulia Concedda, Francesco Tubiello
Organization & country:	FAO

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?

In Chapter 3, p. 3, para 3.12, the sentence “This holds for both terrestrial (soil), freshwater and marine ecosystems (sediments).” is misleading. My understanding is that the accounting boundaries are the atmospheric boundary layer and the subsoil that is directly involved with ecosystem processes. Is this true for all ecosystem assets and ecosystem accounting areas or only for the terrestrial ones?

In Chapter 3, p. 3. Figure 3.1b – I see a revision of the terminology is already envisaged, it would be useful to have here intertidal and marine zones delineated as per UNCLOS (e.g. internal waters; archipelagic waters; Exclusive economic Zone) – if other terms are used, a reference table with Ecosystem types at appropriate level would be useful;

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

Chapter 3, p. 11 Table 3.3: SEEA Ecosystem Type Reference Classification based on the IUCN Global Ecosystem Typology shows Savannas and grasslands as a unique biome category. I would suggest to split savannas and grasslands in two different types. Several accounting exercises (e.g World Bank, 2018, Afghanistan, Capacity Development for Natural Resource Management; UNEP, 2013 Natural Resource Management and Peacebuilding in Afghanistan) as well as ongoing FAO natural capital exercise in Afghanistan consider grassland degradation as a specific and well defined topic which does not include savannas.

Moreover, given the complexity of the IUCN typology computation and the suggested mapping of national classification with IUCN I suggest that more than one reference classification is supplied, at least as example.

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?

Chapter 5, p 2 para 5.7 the landscape is defined as contiguous area of tightly connected, mixed ecosystem types. This definition is very similar to the one of the EEA (geographic area for which an ecosystem account is compiled). A comparison between the two concepts in the text could be useful.

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?

Click here and start typing (The length of your response is not limited by this text box.)

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?

Click here and start typing (The length of your response is not limited by this text box.)

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

Click here and start typing (The length of your response is not limited by this text box.)

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

Chapter 3 p 25. Annex 3.3 *Basic spatial units*: I believe in defining BSUs a combination of pixel and object-based types of analysis should be recommended. OB are in this case particularly suitable to develop custom rules to represent the functional relationships inter and intra ecosystems (e.g. mangrove forest bordering water layers).

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

Click here and start typing (The length of your response is not limited by this text box.)

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

In all chapter's tables filled with numeric examples (e.g. Table 5.3: Ecosystem condition variable account, Table 5.4: Ecosystem condition indicator account) would help understanding of concepts described in the text