



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 8: Principles of valuation for Ecosystem Accounting

Chapter 9: Accounting for ecosystem services in monetary terms

Chapter 10: Accounting for ecosystem assets in monetary terms

**Chapter 11: Integrated and extended accounting for ecosystem services and
assets**

Comments Form

Deadline for responses: 6 July 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 twelve 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 8

Question 1: Do you have comments on the principles proposed to underpin monetary valuation for the revised SEEA EEA, including the use of exchange values and net present value approaches?

General comment

Authors use accessible language and the way they have organised information in the document is clear, coherent and easy to follow. In order to promote more informed decision making as well as providing economic reasons to protect and restore ecosystems, it would be suggested to include not only theoretical but also practical elements of accounting and valuing ecosystem services.

Specific comments

8.1 The purpose and scope of monetary valuation for ecosystem accounting

Section 8.1.1: It would be useful to provide examples or real cases taking place on different geographical places/contexts of the world. In this way, a potential reader could better understand the importance of monetary values and ecosystem accounting for use in sustainable management and policies related to biodiversity.

Section 8.1.2: It would be interesting to include a paragraph in which both monetary valuations (exchange value and TEV) be applied and compared e.g., a quick assessment of a forest by including various land uses and ecosystems.

8.2 Valuation concepts and principles for accounting

With the aim of achieving a more effective communication, it would be suggested to emphasise the importance of including examples that support theoretical approaches. For instance, in the context of food safety, pollination services play a crucial role. That case could show the interplay of concepts mentioned in the section. Analogously, water provisioning could provide a suitable illustration for valuation. Since water is vital worldwide, a couple of further paragraphs could describe a range of concepts and accounts for ecosystem assets and ecosystem services e.g., water as an asset; water regulation/provisioning as ecosystem service; water quality as a nominal value, etc. In these cases, it would be interesting to show the flows of ecosystem services as well as potential conflicts between the use of forests for water supply, biodiversity protection, carbon storage, nesting habitat for pollinators, timber production, recreation, learning, psychological experiences, etc.

Question 2. Do you have any suggestions for topics to include in Annex 8.1?

It would be interesting to include a text box with the aim of exemplify tools such as Total Economic Value (TEV). For instance, given the current prominence of carbon markets, TEV might show not only carbon sequestration, but also other ecosystem services, and socio-economic impacts, which might be combined into one monetary value. Thus, this tool offers policy makers, stakeholders, and communities a quick assessment of a forest's TEV, and a step towards a more complete valuation of different land uses and ecosystems.

Question 3. Do you have any other comments on Chapter 8?

Given that climate change and biodiversity loss represent two of major challenges, it would be suggested to include more details about the integration of different biophysical values into ecosystem accounting. Likewise, how do approach notions of change, flows of ecosystem services (ES) and resilience into economic valuation, especially considering the context of current climatic crisis, post-pandemic situation, etc.

Questions related to Chapter 9

Question 4. Do you have comments on the range of valuation methods proposed for use in estimating exchange values of ecosystem services?

Chapter 9 provides a broad and useful range of methods for estimating monetary values for ecosystem services. The comments below are related to their application in different contexts with the aim of addressing ecosystem management decisions.

From the viewpoint of a policymaker or a practitioner, it would be suggested to consider the following points:

- Including advantages and disadvantages in each method;
- Clarifying under what circumstances is more suitable each method;
- Highlighting weaknesses and strengths, as well as resources and data needed for each method;
- It would be useful to include some selection criteria by method; utility of each method according to specific ecosystem services. In line with this, Table 9.2 shows helpful information.
- It would be suggested to include more examples of ecosystem services that could be valued by using a particular method;
- Given the importance of valuation methods, have authors considered qualitative methods for assessing cultural services? Likewise, it would be practical to suggest spatial and/or temporal cross-scale methods.
- Section 9.5 Considerations: It would be suggested to include a paragraph about how the use of specific methods can inform the design of policies and instruments (e.g., Payment for Ecosystem Services - PES).
- In terms of dynamics of change, flows of ES and resilience in the context of climate crisis, post-pandemic situation, etc., it would be interesting including examples of how to use a combination of methods based on nature cycles e.g., regeneration stages of forests. That could broaden the perspective of methods by revealing interactions between stakeholders and ecosystem services.
- How could a policymaker use some methods for planning [multifunctional] landscapes or management of forests to multiple uses? In this context, socio-cultural valuation methods could be equated with economic methods e.g., non-monetary valuation of cultural services.

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

The following comments are grouped into three contextual topics that might be of interest for enriching the perspective of Chapter 9:

Integration of biophysical, economic and cultural values: Monetary valuation methods suggested in Chapter 9 quantifies exchange values of ES; however, broader approaches could be useful to understand the meaning of those monetary values and the non-monetary, plural and cultural values that underlies them. In line with this, a more integrated approach could be achieved by combining quantitative and qualitative valuation methods. The latter could be useful for estimating not only biophysical, economic, and sociocultural values, but also for acknowledging the entire value of ES to inform policy and implement more sustainable management practices.

Temporal dimensions: if a policy maker would require information to support decision making related to the demand, supply, and values of ES over time, what methods could be suggested?

Integration of methods into a thematic link: for instance, in the context of agroecosystems (accounting for 80% of the world's total water use), if decisions are needed to achieve a sustainable management, what methods could be suggested to estimate valuations by analysing relevant links between crop yield, water consumption and water use efficiency? On the other side, in the context of establishing REDD+ payments and envisioning future avoided deforestation programs, the relationship between forest management and watershed services in economic decision-support methods could be emphasised e.g., what methods could be suitable to estimate the economic benefits of other forest ecosystem services different than carbon? E.g., air quality, water regulation, water supply; watershed services and water security; food and fiber; wild species diversity; learning, supporting identities, recreation and tourism; etc.