System of
Environmental
Economic
Accounting

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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

SEEA

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?

INEI: When differences between the definition provided by the SEEA and the definition utilized in one country arise, how does the national statistics authority should behave? Does the national definition should be updated? Or does the national statistics authority should utilize the national definition for the boundaries and treatments of the ecosystems?

MINAM: When the concept of ecosystem assets (EA) is described, its spatial scope is highlighted as the principal unit of measure for the ecosystem accountability, related in a direct manner with the ecosystem accountability area (EAA), by its specific ecosystem type (ET). This interrelation of concepts is evident in a clear manner through the figure 3.2 and 3.3 of chapter 3.

However, when it's mentioned that the EA is conceptualized inside a greater definition of environmental assets (SCAE, 2012), it's not precise in a clear way the degree of the relation that the EA has inside the definition of environmental assets. Also, it will be important to mention the definition of the ecosystemic services and to detail how this concept is related with the EA. In this point, we could take in account the definition that appears in the *System of Environmental-Economic Accounting 2012 – Experimental Ecosystem Accounting*, specifically in the section 2.2.2, where it's described that the ecosystem services are conceptualized like a measure perspective of the EAs.

In the same way, it is recommended to clarify the tridimensionality characteristic of the EAs. By reading the point 3.9 of chapter 3, it is not clear if the three dimensions part from the components: soil, water and air from the atmosphere. The figures 3.1.a and 3.1.b don't explain by itself the tridimensionality of the EAs.

SERFOR: The proposed definition of ecosystem assets (EA) is based on a spatial component, which includes biotic and abiotic components, directly related to the ecosystem accounting area (EAA). However, as the objective of the SEEA is to measure stocks and flows related to ecosystems, the document does not refer to how the various services provided by the ecosystem will be identified and categorized (some tangible, others intangible)

There is no relationship between the spatial delimitation of EAs and EAAs with the services provided by ecosystems that may be local, regional or global in scope.

We consider it important to address the criteria to identify, categorize the various services that ecosystems provide, which will ultimately determine the importance or relevance of EAAs.

How to account, stocks, flows, of the different types of services that ecosystems provide?

SEEA

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

INEI: Related to question number 1, every country has their own delimitations and definitions for ecosystems, what should a country do if it differs? Should we try to align to the SEEA Ecosystem Type Reference Classification?

MINAM: In the point 3.40 and in the section 3.3.4 from chapter 3, it is mentioned that when a national classification of the EAs is not available, the reference classification of the ecosystem type SEEA should be based in the typology of the global ecosystem from the UICN.

About this matter, to consider the typology of the UICN as a reference of classification, will have certain advantages for its global application. It is recommend to point out in chapter 3 what is mentioned in point 4.10 from chapter 4, about making a correspondence between the national classifications with the reference one, with the purpose of having international comparability.

SERFOR: Regarding the proposed typology of ecosystem types (Global Ecosystem Typology (GET) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)), the diversity of ecosystems present in the countries must be taken into account. The IUCN global classification does not necessarily encompass all ecosystems that for our country can be very important in terms of biodiversity and economic.

Alternatives or criteria should be established to harmonize the global classification with the national classifications.

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?

INEI: How much priority should have making a correspondence to the SEEA ET reference classification for the purpose of international comparison? Depending on the differences between the country classification and the SEEA ET, it can be a costly affair.

MINAM: About the recording of the extension and the condition of the ecosystem, it's recommended to include numbers like table 4.1, to show the additive properties of the table, as well as the visualization of some particularities like: (a) the additions to one ET will be combined with one entry of the reduction of other ET and (b) the total recorded area in the last column of the table 4.1, generally will be the same as the opening and closure (because the total additions will be the same as the total reductions).

SERFOR: Taking the comment for question 1 as a reference, it is observed that the development of the accounting of the condition of the ecosystem encompasses physical, chemical, biological or landscape variables, which is pertinent to describe the condition of

each ecosystem. However, it is necessary to specify criteria, variables, metrics, etc. to account for the condition of the different services provided by the ecosystem.

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?

INEI: At what level of aggregation is best to show the information? At a national level or at a district level, for example? Sometimes the information available is only in some regions.

MINAM: No.

SERFOR: Regarding the three stages planted, it would be important to define how the relevant variables are determined for the analysis processes, taking into account the priorities of each country.
It would also be important for the consulting team to define in matrix the conditions for the normalization of the different indicators included in the analysis that were carried out.
Regarding the metrics, although most of the metrics included in the matrix are interesting, we should not bias the issue of state orientation, in many countries the importance of ecosystems lies in the benefits they provide to rural populations.
Although the metrics for the selection of ecosystems are interesting, it would be important to define in the document in a matrix the minimum criteria to achieve each metric, taking into account the variability or priorities of the different countries.

SEEA

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?

INEI: Could you clarify what you consider long-term for the anthropogenic reference condition? Or is it better to use this reference condition when the ecosystem has been undisturbed in the periods of times that we are comparing, for example?

MINAM: In the document, there is mention about the use of the natural state of the ecosystems as a reference condition. This posture will be based in a valid point from its own conception, because it establishes a base line of reference (natural state), which shouldn't be biased by previous interventions (for the measure of change).

However, it should be noted that in ecosystems where humans specifically appear, for long periods of time, above all, a "natural" state and would not represent a significant reference for the accounting of the condition of ecosystems, as mentioned in points 5.33 of the Chapter 5.

For this reason, the differentiation of the conditions of natural and anthropocentric references would be valid. As mentioned in point 5.31, a natural state determined by natural ecological and evolutionary processes, which incorporates self-regeneration and involves dynamic equilibria in response to regimes of natural disturbances; conditions that would not occur in full magnitude in ecosystems "altered" by human action.

SERFOR: In the document reference is made to the state and / or condition of the ecosystem, in this regard we believe that this analysis in ecosystems is fundamental, this mainly to measure the changes that may occur in different periods.
But it is important to establish indicators that allow us to determine this change over time, or under which criteria we define the starting point for this reference level.

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

SERFOR: It is not clear the reasons why they propose to use the typology proposed by IUCN, although it is valid and interesting information for other analyzes. In the case of the ecosystem account, it would be appropriate to use the classification established by the FAO, the latter is agreed between the different member countries and, in turn, it should also be noted that such information has already been used in the SCAE and therefore would not have to adopt new typologies.

SEEA

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

No.

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

No.

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

SERFOR: With regard to establishing a reference condition, I think that the references developed by FAO should be used, and the same that is agreed to some extent in the different member countries.

SEEA