



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)**

Name:	Burkhard Schweppe-Kraft
Organization & country:	Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, Germany  (The German Federal Statistical Office, too, considers it problematic to categorize the total biomass production of a cultivated ecosystem as an ecosystem service and supports the proposal to present further "intermediate services" in the accounts in this context)

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?**

Reporting gross biomass harvested as an ecosystem service may be misleading. This is especially the case when the relationship between gross biomass harvested and the extent of ecosystems and biotic production conditions are only loose due to high intensive production techniques and especially if these production techniques have serious detrimental effects on other services like water, as well as on the natural services that underpin biomass production like a decreasing humus content.

The case shown above: steadily increasing gross biomass harvested while the area for biomass production is steadily decreasing and biotic elements that contribute naturally to biomass production like the humus content are deteriorating may be not only typical for Germany but also for other densely populated countries with high intensive agriculture.

Therefore the following changes are recommended in chapter

#### **6.4 The treatment of specific ecosystem services and other environmental flows**

##### *6.4.1 The treatment of biomass provisioning services:*

6.55 In practice, there is a considerable measurement challenge in either identifying all of the relevant individual inputs or accurately measuring the ecosystem contribution to the gross biomass that is harvested that takes into account the diversity of cultivated production contexts. Thus, ~~a suitable proxy for the measurement of the flow of biomass provisioning services in cultivated production contexts is~~ in all cases of cultivated production, irrespective of the extent of human inputs and the intensity of management, the gross biomass harvested should be reported as a measure of the biomass provisioning service.

6.56 (new) When cultivated production is of high intensity the gross biomass harvested may increase due to additional inputs, enhanced seeds and intensified management while the extent of the ecosystem asset under use decreases (e.g. through conversion to settlements) and biotic elements that positively contribute to biomass growth deteriorate (e.g. humus content). In such cases biomass harvested, taken as the only measure for the ecosystem service, may be misleading. It is recommended then to report additional information on the contribution of ecosystems to biomass production, like aggregated indices on the natural fertility of the sites used for biomass production or special information on single aspects that are crucial for the contribution of ecosystems like soil-water availability or pollination. This information should be reported as intermediate ecosystem services. In order to avoid misinterpretation the biomass harvested may be called a “jointly produced service” instead of an “ecosystem service”, especially in public communication.

The text can be followed by 6.56 (old)

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

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

**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?**

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

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

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

**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?**

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

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

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