



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS  
STATISTICS DIVISION  
UNITED NATIONS



System of  
Environmental  
Economic  
Accounting

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## System of Environmental-Economic Accounting— Ecosystem Accounting

***Global Consultation on the complete document:  
Comments Form***

**Deadline for responses: 30 November 2020**

**Send responses to: [seea@un.org](mailto:seea@un.org)**

Name:	GEO BON Policy Task Force
Organization & country:	Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network

## General comments

### **Question 1: Do you have comments on the overall draft of the SEEA Ecosystem Accounting?**

NA

## Comments by sets of chapters

### **Question 2. Do you have comments on Chapters 1-2 of the draft SEEA Ecosystem Accounting?**

1. Chap1, P.9, §1.37: The GEOBON frameworks for Essential Biodiversity Variables (EBVs) and Essential Ecosystem Services Variables (EESVs) can be added to the list as harmonized datasets between primary observation and indicators.
2. Chap1, P.12, §1.1: We would also include that such a framework allows for a harmonized approach to ecosystem accounting.
3. Chap1, P.20, §1.3.8: We would extend the point to explicitly identify the opportunity for related output indicators that can be aligned with tracking some targets and target elements of the CBD post2020 Global Biodiversity Framework
4. Chap1, P.20, 1.4: It would be helpful to show a tree diagram that visualizes the modular approach where a user can develop certain components, related components or the entire accounting framework (to some extent Figure 2.2 does that but it's a bit basic in scope - it would be useful to show the inter-relationships in terms of workflows (e.g. need ecosystem extent accounts in order to generate ecosystem service accounts (this could then include a depiction of indicators as outputs of these accounts))
5. Chap2, P.33, §2.8.9: Some measure of uncertainty would be useful

### **Question 3. Do you have comments on Chapters 3-5 of the draft SEEA Ecosystem Accounting?**

1. Chap.3, P.47, §3.6.3: For the UNSD publication on how to utilize GIS for delineating ecosystem types, we would recommend bringing in support from the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) on how to do this as they have a defined and simple application method
2. Chap.4, P.63, §4.1.4: It might be useful, unless we missed it, to provide some rationale with regard to the benefit of delineating reductions and additions based on managed vs. unmanaged
3. Chap.4, P.65, §4.31: Indicators related to the proportion of protection of different ecosystems and their threat status (proportion degraded) can also be derived from ecosystem asset base data (when combined with other data)
4. Chap.5, P.70, § 5.3: Include the utility of this for assessing the proportion of ecosystems under various threat categories (based on the Red List of Ecosystems threat classifications)
5. Chap.5, P.70, §5.4: This should also highlight the critical importance of time series data to determine ecological condition - often what is seen on the ground is not representative of what was originally there - only thru time series monitoring such as from the University of Maryland's Global Forest Change data (Hansen et al.), can one classify whether a particular ecosystem asset is natural, semi-natural or degraded.
6. Chap.5, P.70, §5.6: it also should be mentioned that it allows for the assessment of ecosystem threat status (proportion of ecosystems under varying degrees of threat and how that is changing over time)

7. Chap.5, P.71, §5.8: Again - there is a need to highlight how biodiversity change data (time-series trends) is critical to measure change from a natural state
8. Chap.5, P.75, Table 5.1: While this is sound in terms of assessing ecological condition, is it always realistic that this data is available at any given point within a national boundary in order to fully assess ecological condition across the entire nation? Would it not be useful to also suggest some simpler methodology that assesses whether an ecosystem asset unit has been degraded based on a land-use change (or not)?
9. Chap.5, P.83, §5.69: An ecosystem condition indicator would be more meaningful if it followed some established Red List of Ecosystems (RLE) methodology whereby the proportion of the ecosystem asset that is degraded determines its threat status - a national indicator can then be developed that gives a proportional representation of to what extent each ecosystem asset class is in different degrees of threat

**Question 4. Do you have comments on Chapters 6-7 of the draft SEEA Ecosystem Accounting?**

NA

**Question 5. Do you have comments on Chapters 8-11 of the draft SEEA Ecosystem Accounting?**

NA

**Question 6. Do you have comments on Chapters 12-14 of the draft SEEA Ecosystem Accounting?**

1. Chap.13, P.238, Table 13.1: It would be useful to add an extra column to indicate the connections between the SEEA Accounts and the EBVs
2. Chap.13, P.243, §13.36: Perhaps premature but it would be useful to cross-reference these indicator classes to the post-2020 goals and targets for the CBD to indicate how SEEA EEA can produce indicators that serve this reporting.
3. Chap. 13, P.252, Table 13.4: The Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS) is developing Essential Ocean Variables (EOVs) for biology which include biodiversity, and from which a number of Essential Biodiversity Variables (EBVs) could be derived for a number of groups of organisms and habitats (including those listed in Table 13.4). See for instance Moltmann et al., 2019 (<https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2019.00291>) and Muller-Karger et al., 2018 (<https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2018.00211>)
4. Chap.14, P.268, §14.1: It would be useful in this introduction to point out the large reporting and thus indicator demand on countries and that identifying the common, few data sources that can populate multiple biodiversity indicators and how this relates to the core data that serves the EEA accounting approach is a way to harmonize and simplify a nation's reporting structure. This is stated in 14.20 but this is a key point to raise at the beginning.
5. Chap.14, P.274, §14.2: Again, ecosystem threat status (proportion of different ecosystem asset classes under varying threat status) is a useful indicator derived from ecosystem condition when overlaid with ecosystem extent.
6. Chap.14, P.277, Table 14.5: Will this be updated just prior to publication to ensure it has the latest formulation of the post 2020 Targets?
7. Chap.14, P.277, Table 14.5: Many other potential indicators for Goal A that come from SEEA - this includes Ecosystem Protection Level (an indicator tracking the proportion of various national ecosystems under protection) and Ecosystem Threat Status (that tracks changes in proportion of ecosystems that critically endangered, endangered, threatened, least concern).

8. Chap.14, P. 278, Table 14.6: Row 2 should also include the Ecosystem Protection Level indicator.
9. Chap.14, P.282, §14.49: Suggested additional text: "The interactions and dynamics across biodiversity, ecosystem functions and ecosystem services (ecological feedbacks), as well as socio-ecological feedbacks between natural and human systems, which can be assessed using relevant suits of Essential Biodiversity Variables (EBVs) and Essential Ecosystem Services Variables (EESVs).
10. Chap.14, P.283, Figure 14.2: an updated version of the figure has been provided.
11. Chap.14, P.284, Table 14.8: an updated version of the table has been provided.
12. Chap.14, P.277-280, Table 14.5, 14.6, 14.7: It would be good to provide rationale for these sections given their importance/impact in these global frameworks.