



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 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](mailto: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](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)

**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?**

The definition and description of EAs and EEAs is clear and the associated measurement boundaries and treatments are reasonable.

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

We have doubts that the level 2 of the classification is sufficiently detailed to ensure international comparison (see 3.48). Some countries will have only a limited number of ETs at this level. Moreover, arable land and urban ecosystems are both part of T7 for example, which will hide the potential expansion of settlements at the expense of agricultural land. We suggest to create an intermediate list between level 2 and level 3 for terrestrial ecosystems.

The complex mosaics (e.g. wooded pastures) and ecotones often have their own functioning and a clear potential in terms of restoration measures (agroforestry, reforestation). They should constitute an ET category rather than being analysed only according to changes in the condition of the ecosystem asset (cf. point 3.57).

**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?**

Ecosystem functioning is significantly impacted by the spatial pattern and the size of the EA. We think it is unfortunate that this information is lost in the ecosystem extent account table although it is included in the background data. We suggest defining and integrating indicators of the spatial pattern (occurrence of EA or length of border of EA) in the standard table officially.

**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?**

We have doubts that international comparability and reproducibility are ensured as the definitions are rather open. We suggest including a separate chapter on how comparability and reproducibility is achieved on a global level.

**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?**

The implementation of the suggested approach for a large number of ETs and indicators implies a considerable effort. The implementation costs might discourage countries to create a comprehensive condition account. We suggest to better highlight the added-value of implementing such condition accounts in complementarity of national separately developed ecosystem monitoring.

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

The typology is clear and logical.

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

3.10: The atmosphere directly above and within an ecosystem might not be representative of the EA since pollutants can be transported across regions.

Table 5.1: We want to point out that the chemical state can be site-dependent and thus difficult to assess.

Landscape-level characteristics are diversely assessed and very much scale-dependent. We suggest a clarification of the assessment method.

Annex 3.1, p19: We suggest including fungi and bacteria since they also play a crucial role in ecosystem functioning.

Annex 3.3: We suggest defining at least a preferred BSU size to contribute to comparability of the results.

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

Please specify the indicators used to measure pattern and fragmentation.

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

Annex 5.3, p25: Many ecological processes are not quasi-linear but follow a Gaussian curve with an optimum and unfavourable areas on either side of the scale. For these cases, the assignment of reference values need clarification.