



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 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

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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.

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 6

Question 1: Do you have comments on the concepts and definitions for ecosystem services, benefits and associated components of the ecosystem accounting framework?

Sometimes it is not totally clear to me what the difference is between benefits and well-being and outputs and outcomes. For instance, paragraph 6.18 states that ‘the focus of measurements for accounting purposes should be on outputs ... (e.g. medical care) rather than on outcomes ... (e.g. health)’. Also, paragraph 6.19 says that the focus of ecosystem accounting is benefit rather well-being.

However, table 6.1 mentions improving health outcomes as an example of a benefit. To me it is a bit confusing because I generally associate health with outcomes and well-being rather than with outputs and benefits. May be it is better to refer to a medical care indicator (e.g. % of people with respiratory diseases) in the example in table 6.1.

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

Paragraph 6.40 mentions that ‘The reference list will support discussions among ecosystem accounts compilers, the comparison of measurement and valuation techniques and the comparison of accounting results’. I understand that different techniques are being tried. What should we expect from that evaluations? A future version of the manual will show the techniques and will suggest the best one, so that the results are more comparable. Or the method to apply will depend on the place, the available data, etc.?

I think it is really good to have flexibility, but I am also concerned that being so flexible will detract from comparability and credibility to the framework.

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?

I agree. Moreover, I think the distinction of abiotic flows makes easier to connect ecosystem accounting with bio economy, two topics of relevance in our country.

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

More conceptually, paragraph 6.19 highlights that the definition and measurement of well-being is outside the scope of ecosystem accounting. However, in many cases the consideration of well-being is very important in the decision making process and one of the aims of ecosystem accounting is to support that process. In that sense, is there any document or analysis that considers how to complement and integrate in a consistent way the information produced in the SEEA-EEA with other evaluations that contemplate well-being (e.g. cost-benefits analyses)?

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?

No. I think it is clear and intuitive.

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

Table 7.3 shows the example of air filtration services. To me it is a collective service, so I would registered the use in the column of government, rather than in households.