



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 3: Spatial units for Ecosystem Accounting

Chapter 4: Accounting for Ecosystem Extent

Chapter 5: Accounting for Ecosystem Condition

Comments Form

Deadline for responses: 30 April2020

Send responses to: seea@un.org

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Name: | Magdalena Borges |
| Organization&country: | Instituto Sudamericano para Estudios sobre Resiliencia y Sostenibilidad (SARAS, por su sigla en inglés)(PhD student), Uruguay |

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

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?

I have no comments. I think those definitions are clear and particularly useful to create maps and show the spatial variability.

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

I agree with using the IUCN Global Ecosystem Typology as the reference classification to facilitate international comparison.

I think we have a huge challenge in Uruguay regarding this topic, since we have many land use/cover maps with different classifications, resolutions, sources (satellite images, surveys..), covering different periods, which were created for different purposes, etc.

I believe we should discuss with the institutions involved in the production and use of these statistics, which is the best land use/cover map to use as our starting point in the creation of an ecosystem accounting system in our country.

Is there any advice on how to do this selection?

Finally, the conversion to the international classification would probably be relatively easy.

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?

I think the explanation about how to record those changes seems totally reasonable.

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?

I think the three step approach is good and logic.

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?

I understand the importance of considering for instance, the pristine or natural state or minimally disturbed conditions, etc., as the reference level. However, it could be very difficult and costly to measure.

I think it would be easier to estimate and maybe more useful, to work with a policy target or a threshold. I know it is possible to include those values in the framework, but not as the reference level.

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

I found the ecosystem condition typology very appropriate to organise the data.

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

No more comments.

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

No more comments.

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

I would like to make one comment and some questions.

Comment:

- Maybe is possible to relate the SEEA - EEA (ecosystem accounting) with the SEEA - CF (central framework) by for example, connecting the flows from the economy to the environment with the pressures you commented in chapter 5 and the flows from the environment to the economy with the concept of overexploitation of natural resources that you also mentioned there. I mean, those flows affect the state of ecosystems and it may be possible to connect them with the ecosystem condition accounts, probably through some biophysical modelling. And this leads me to the first question...

Questions:

- How can models (like SWAT or InVest) be embedded in the SEEA framework? I know some people used them to support ecosystem accounting as part of this first experimental stage, but I still do not know if they are definitely going to be considered in a more systematic way in the final report.
- I was also wondering about how the dynamics involved in the famous cascade diagram ([link](#)) are reflected in the SEEA – EEA framework. Because for me, with this system of accounts we can see the condition of the ecosystems for different accounting periods (e.g. every year), but, how those changes are explained? Does the framework really answer that question? May be this is part of what is going to be covered in the next draft, as said in the note to reviewers in page 16, chapter 5.