



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 April 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 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?

No

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

The terrestrial ecosystem types are compatible with the CEC (Commission for Environmental Cooperation) ecoregions level 1 and 2 for North America (<http://www3.cec.org/islandora/en/item/10415-north-american-terrestrial-ecoregionslevel-iii>). Mexico has developed a more detailed national level 4 map (<http://geoportal.conabio.gob.mx/#!!=ecort08gw@m=mixto>).

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?

Extent accounts are an easy and convenient way to generate meaningful data about ecosystems, but it is not by itself necessary for generating a condition account. But the relation between extent and condition could be considered as a mixed indicator. The main indicators to be derived from the extent account should be deforestation and urbanization.

One caveat not mentioned in the chapter and very important to take into account is the problem generated by comparing two land cover maps and the associated multiplication of map errors that lead to a low accuracy of extent accounts, especially in ecosystems that show small changes, because the map error can be bigger than the changes that occurred. This accuracy problem gets more pronounced the more detailed the change matrix is structured.

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?

In general, the approach seems reasonable. Stage 1 would be the technical generation of the data to be used as an indicator. Stage 2 and 3 could also be in inverse order, depending on how the composite indicator is conceptualized: In the proposed form, every variable would have a reference condition and then get aggregated, but in the ecosystem integrity index proposed by Mexico, the variables are aggregated first because of the underlying conceptualization of ecosystem integrity as a latent variable emerging from observable variables (instrumental tier).

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 most difficult part is referencing the observed condition because of lack of data and understanding of ecosystem function. This aspect should be further discussed between experts based on presented case studies.

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

No.

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

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

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

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

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

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