



Convention on
Biological Diversity



Forum of Experts in SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting

28-30 April 2015, New York

Annotated Agenda

Tuesday, 28 April 2015

Registration (8:45am – 9:15am)

Session 1: Opening (9.15 am – 9.55 am)

Opening Statement, welcome remarks, and introduction

Stefan Schweinfest, Director, UNSD

Review of the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting Technical Guidance

The objectives, working method and expected outputs of the Forum will be presented to the participants. The session will also present an overview of the draft SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting (SEEA-EEA) Technical Guidance document, which provides a range of content to support the testing and implementation of ecosystem accounting at national level. The presentation will illustrate the main elements of the Technical Guidance, focusing on the 4 thematic topics on 1) ecosystem units; 2) classification of ecosystem services; 3) ecosystem services modelling, and 4) the link between ecosystem condition and capacity and its impact on the flow of future services capacity. The presentation will conclude with a set of questions on each chosen thematic topics for discussion in the subsequent session in the Forum.

Ivo Havinga, UNSD

Session 2: Ecosystem accounting units – discussion of approaches and methods
(9.55am – 1.00pm)

Fundamental to all accounting is the need for a clear framework to delineate accounting units. The challenge in ecosystem accounting is finding a match between ecological units and accounting units such that (dis)aggregation can occur systematically and the ecosystem services for each unit can be identified consistently. This session aims to review examples from ongoing activities, advance understanding of and provide recommendation on the techniques and information available to

measure and classify areas of land and other spatial areas for the purpose of delineating and classifying spatial units for ecosystem accounting.

Session 2 opening by Chair: *Kristine Grimsrud, Statistics Norway*

Presentation on issues (30 mins): *Michael Bordt, SEEA-EEA Project Consultant*

Discussants (30 mins)

Roger Sayre, Group of Earth Observation

Gregory Scott, UNSD

Francois Soulard, Statistics Canada

Questions and answers (20 mins)

Coffee break & Breakout Group Discussions (40 mins)

Feedback from the groups (30 mins)

Plenary discussion, facilitated by the Chair (30 mins)

LUNCH (1.00pm-2.30pm)

Session 3: Ecosystem service classification and links to ecosystem functions and conditions
(2.30pm – 6.00pm)

This session will discuss issues in classification of ecosystem services and their relationship with the functions and conditions of the ecosystems. The importance to have a robust classification of ecosystem services that are exhaustive but flexible for the purpose of ecosystem accounting was recognized. There are two clear challenges – 1) what is the boundary to define the services; and 2) What is the link between functions, conditions and services? This session aims to discuss alternative approaches and ideas in a common classification of ecosystem services, and to provide recommendation on specific classification issues to advance the development and application of classification of ecosystem services for ecosystem accounting.

Session 3 opening by Chair: *Pushpam Kumar, UNEP*

Presentation on issues (25 mins): *Mark Eigenraam, UNSD*

Discussants (40 mins)

Jan-Erik Petersen, European Environment Agency

Dixon Landers & Charles Rhodes, US Environmental Protection Agency

Lucy Wilson, UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre

Amanda Driver, South African National Biodiversity Institute

Questions and answers (20 mins)

Coffee break & Breakout Group Discussions (40 mins)

Feedback from the groups (30 mins)

Plenary discussion, facilitated by the Chair (45 mins)

Wednesday, 29 April 2015

Session 4: Measurement and modelling of ecosystem conditions, functions and services
(9.00am – 12.30pm)

Many ecosystems and their properties (including biodiversity) are linked with current and potential services flows. Often such properties relate with resilience and adaptability in view of environmental change and can be characterised through asset condition and capacity. Many of the ecosystem services flows (water and air purification, carbon sequestration, waste assimilation etc.) are provided by ecological or bio-physical functions (evaporation, transpiration, recharge, runoff, carbon, biomass accumulation) that are difficult to observe and must be modelled. Modelling these processes has been occurring for decades but the challenge accounting brings is the need to understand data uncertainty (both input and output from models) and the appropriate scale at which the model can be applied and feasibly linked with economic transactions. This session aims to review the advances of measurement and modelling techniques, examine the link between assets' condition and capacity and the impact on the flow of ecosystem services. It will discuss the progress of methods used to estimate ecosystem services being provided by ecosystem functions and assets with an objective to advance our understanding of the criteria to assess a model's ability to be used for the measurement of ecosystem services for ecosystem accounting. The session will also evaluate a few selected models against a set of criteria including data input requirement to examine their suitability for accounting purpose.

Session 4 opening by Chair: Bridget Emmett, Natural Environment Research Council, UK

Presentation on issues (25mins): Wilbert van Rooij, Plansup consultancy

Discussants (40 mins)

Bethanna Jackson, Victoria University of Wellington

Stefan van der Esch, PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency

Ferdinando Villa, Basque Centre for Climate Change

Bob McKane, US Environmental Protection Agency

Questions and answers (20 mins)

Coffee break & Breakout Group Discussions (60 mins)

Feedback from the groups (30 mins)

Plenary discussion, facilitated by the Chair (30 mins)

LUNCH (12.30pm-2.00pm)

**Session 5: Structure of Ecosystem accounts – compilation of accounting outputs and tables
(2.00pm – 5.30pm)**

A sequence of ecosystem accounts is proposed for supporting the experimentation in pilot countries. The sequence reflects a series of inter-related accounts, some whose development is well advanced and some still under development. The primary ecosystem accounts that form part of any accounting exercise include accounts in physical terms for ecosystem extent and condition, the supply of ecosystem services and their use, and underlying component accounts designed to support the estimation of primary accounts and supply additional information in their own right. These component accounts cover thematic areas such as land, carbon, water and species diversity. Other accounts will also be discussed, including accounts for ecosystem capacity (to supply future services), and accounts in monetary terms such as supply and use tables for ecosystem services, ecosystem asset accounts, and augmented input-output tables and balance sheets. In developing the accounting structures there are important links to the delineation and classification of spatial units, the classification of ecosystem services and related beneficiaries, and the intended applications of the accounts in terms of research questions and scale of analysis.

The aim of discussion of ecosystem accounts at the Forum is to form a common understanding of (i) the set of ecosystem accounts and how they relate to each other; (ii) the relevant structures and appropriate levels of detail for compilation; (iii) the relevant measurement issues and practical concerns (including aggregation of indicators, valuation of ecosystem services, and the integration with standard national accounts); and, finally (iv) which accounts should be of highest priority for testing. The discussion should enable clear messages on the scope of testing to be conveyed to pilot countries and also help formulate the broader research agenda on ecosystem accounting.

Session 5 opening by Chair: Joe de Beer, Statistics South Africa

Presentation on issues (25 mins): Carl Obst, SEEA-EEA Project Consultant

Discussants (40 mins)

Anton Steurer, Eurostat

Rocky Harris, UK Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

Kimberly Dale Zieschang

Jean-Louis Weber

Questions and answers (20 mins)

Coffee break & Breakout Group Discussions (60 mins)

Feedback from the groups (30 mins)

Plenary discussion, facilitated by the Chair (30 mins)

Thursday, 30 April 2015

Session 6: Summary of working group session - Recommendation and way forward for the testing of SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting (9.00 am – 11.00pm)

The session will provide a summary of each working group session with a review of recommendation raised during the agenda discussion. Participants will have an opportunity to review and provide additional comments with the goal of developing a final set of summary and recommendation for the four working group session, which will serve as an input for the Technical Guidance and development of a more refined methods and guidelines in advancing the testing of the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting.

Session 7 opening by Chair: Ivo Havinga, UNSD

Session summaries:

Session 2 by Michael Bordt, SEEA-EEA Project Consultant

Session 3 by Mark Eigenraam, UNSD

Session 4 by Wilbert van Rooij, Plansup consultancy

Session 5 by Carl Obst, SEEA-EEA Project Consultant

Plenary discussion, facilitated by the Chair (60 mins)

Coffee break (30 minutes)

**Session 7: Strategy and roadmap
(11.20 am – 12.20 pm)**

This session will discuss a draft Global Strategy for Advancing the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting will be presented to participants. The presentation will focus on a strategy for building ecosystem accounting capability globally and the road maps towards 2020.

Presentation by Alessandra Alfieri, UNSD

Plenary discussion (40 min)

**Session 8: Closing Session
(12.20 pm – 1.00 pm)**

Closing Session, by Ivo Havinga, Alessandra Alfieri and Mark Eigenraam, UNSD