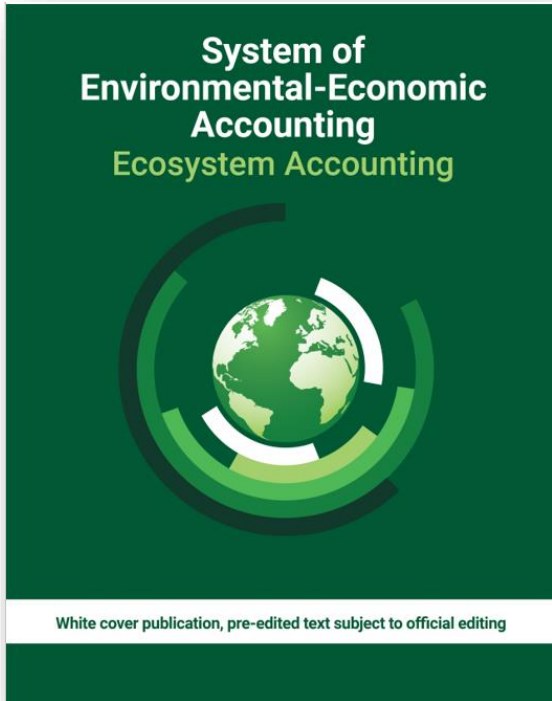


# Report back from Area B2: Technical Committee on SEEA Ecosystem Accounting

Mandy Driver  
South African National Biodiversity Institute

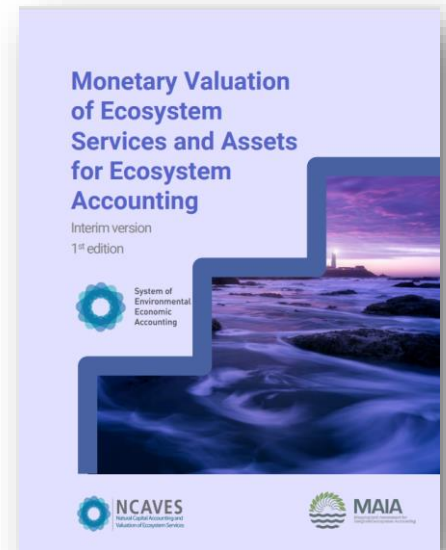
**UN Committee of Experts  
on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEA)  
Eighteenth Meeting, 20-21 June 2023**





- SEEA EA adopted in March 2021, white cover version published Sept 2021
- **Final text undergoing official UN editing and copy preparation**, expected to be finished by end of June 2023
- **Translations** into Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish
  - Currently being reviewed, preliminary texts published on SEEA EA website

- Interim **report** on “Monetary valuation of ecosystem services and assets for ecosystem accounting” published July 2022



- **E-learning course** developed in 2022, now translated into Spanish (published) and French (to be published soon)

# Revising the terms of reference & structure of the TC

- **Bi-monthly meetings** with two parts to each meeting
  - Part 1: **Regular work** of the Committee
  - Part 2: Discussion on a **substantive topic** (experts invited as needed) relevant to implementation of SEEA EA
  - 2 hours often feels too short!
- **Terms of reference** reviewed to focus more strongly on implementation – attached as Annex to the report
  - Overall objectives: To maintain the statistical standard, advance the research agenda for SEEA EA and support its implementation
- **Proposal to review membership** to strengthen country membership and geographic distribution – to be further discussed further at August meeting

# Substantive topics discussed over the year

- **IUCN Global Ecosystem Typology** – reference classification for ecosystem types in SEEA EA
  - Deepen understanding including issues related to cross-walking national, regional or other global ecosystem classifications to the GET
- **IUCN Red List of Ecosystems**
  - Complementarities and synergies with ecosystem extent and condition accounts
- **Task Force on Nature-Related Financial Disclosures (TNFD)** and the biodiversity standard of the **Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)**
  - Better understanding links between these private sector initiatives and SEEA EA
- **Carbon accounting**
- **Global ecosystem mapping initiatives**
  - GEO Global Ecosystem Atlas, European Space Agency initiatives, GlobES, CEOS ecosystem extent task team – links to SEEA EA?

# Two working groups continued their work

- **Forest ecosystems working group**

- Met 6 times over the year
- 4 task teams (ecosystem extent; condition; carbon accounting; links to policy)
- Small group on definition of forest ecosystems → technical note in progress

- **Oceans working group**

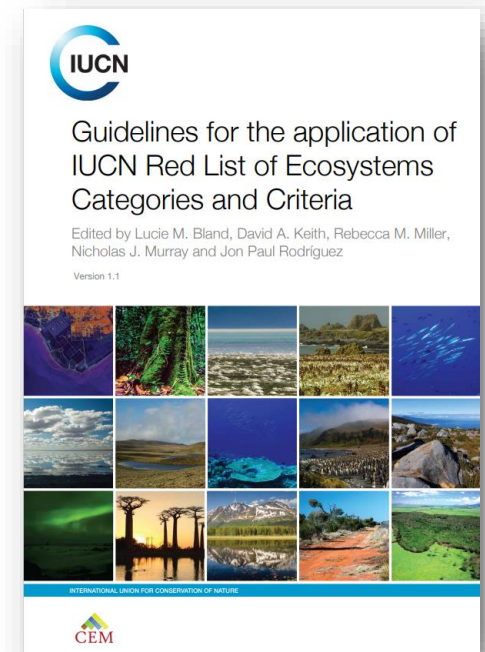
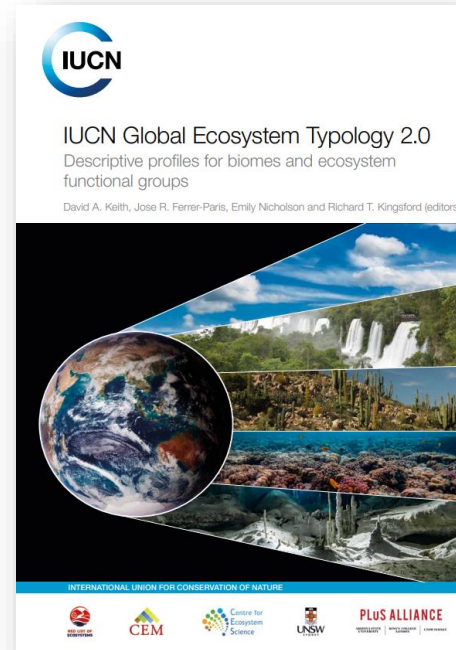
- Met 3 times over the year
- Originally envisaged development of SEEA Ocean as a primary focus, but has not been possible to secure resources for this
- At last meeting (14 June), agreed to meet quarterly going forward. Global Ocean Accounts Partnership (GOAP) Secretariat will assist with preparing technical notes (one per quarter) with support of WG members

# Small group convened on carbon accounting

- Prompted by a request from the World Bank's Change in Wealth of Nations (CWON) – wanting consistency with the SEEA
- Issues include:
  - Scope of biophysical carbon accounts
  - Scale dependency when measuring sequestration
  - Double counting when valuing both sequestration and retention of carbon
  - Carbon pricing/monetary valuation
- Technical note under development

# Regular engagements with the IUCN

- Several points of connection between SEEA EA and IUCN, including:
  - IUCN is the custodian of the **Global Ecosystem Typology**, the reference classification for ecosystem types in SEEA EA
  - IUCN is the custodian for the **Red List of Ecosystems**, which sits side by side with SEEA ecosystem extent as a headline indicator for Goal A in the GBF, and shares some common foundational datasets with ecosystem accounts



# Regular engagements with the IUCN (cont.)

- Two meetings held to date with IUCN Secretariat and key IUCN experts
- First joint “project”:
  - Bringing the IUCN Global Ecosystem Typology into the family of international statistical classifications under the UN Committee of Experts on International Statistical Classifications (UNCEISC) – process underway
- Envisage regular meetings going forward; in process of developing a medium-term collaborative programme of work
  - Including leveraging synergies between implementing SEEA EA and the Red List of Ecosystems at country level



# Dissolving previous working groups – work to be taken up by TC as a whole

## **Working group on SEEA EA indicators**

- Established in June 2020 to support the revision process, in particular Chapter 12
- Will be taken up through support to SEEA EA indicators in the Global Biodiversity Framework

## **Subgroup on Accounting for Biodiversity**

- Established in March 2020 to support the revision process, in particular Chapter 13
- Contribution of SEEA EA to accounting for biodiversity, including to the implementation and monitoring of the GBF, is a focus for the TC as a whole
- Need for a separate work stream not identified at this stage

# Provisional programme of work for 2023/24 – to be further developed at next meeting in August

- Support the development of **headline indicators in the Global Biodiversity Framework**
  - Including metadata and practical guidance for indicators based on SEEA EA
- Technical discussions to develop **guidance notes**, including:
  - Cross-walking national and regional maps of ecosystem types to IUCN GET Ecosystem Functional Groups
  - Definition of forest ecosystems
  - Approaches and methods for compilation of ecosystem extent accounts
  - Methods for measuring global climate regulation services in physical and monetary terms
  - Ecosystem services assessment at different scales

# Provisional programme of work for 2023/24 cont.

- **Practical guidance on priority applications**, capturing and sharing examples and lessons from experience
- Engaging with **private sector initiatives on measuring nature** - building conceptual and practical links, working towards alignment of private and public accounting related to ecosystems
- Engaging with **global initiatives to classify and map ecosystems**
- Continuing the **engagement with the IUCN** to improve collaboration between the Red List of Ecosystem assessments and ecosystem accounting at global and national levels
- Engaging as appropriate with the **update of the SNA, SEEA CF, international classifications** and other relevant statistical update processes
- Providing guidance and direction to the **work of the WGs** to ensure coherence and integration of their work with the TC's programme of work as a whole

# Questions to the Committee

Does the Committee:

1. Agree with the provisional broad programme of work of the Technical Committee, as outlined above? Are there additional priority areas that the Technical Committee should consider?
2. Approve the revised Terms of Reference for the TC (Annex 1)
3. Endorse the disbanding of the Working Group on SEEA EA Indicators and the Subgroup on Accounting for Biodiversity that were established to support the revision process in 2020?  
(with the understanding that these issues will be incorporated into the work of the TC as a whole)
4. Have suggestions on how the Technical Committee can better support the implementation of the SEEA Ecosystem Accounting