

System of Environmental Economic Accounting



System of
Environmental
Economic
Accounting

Area B2 – SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting

Update on the revision process

14th meeting of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Environmental-
Economic Accounting (UNCEEA), New York, 24-25 June 2019

Marko Javorsek, UNSD

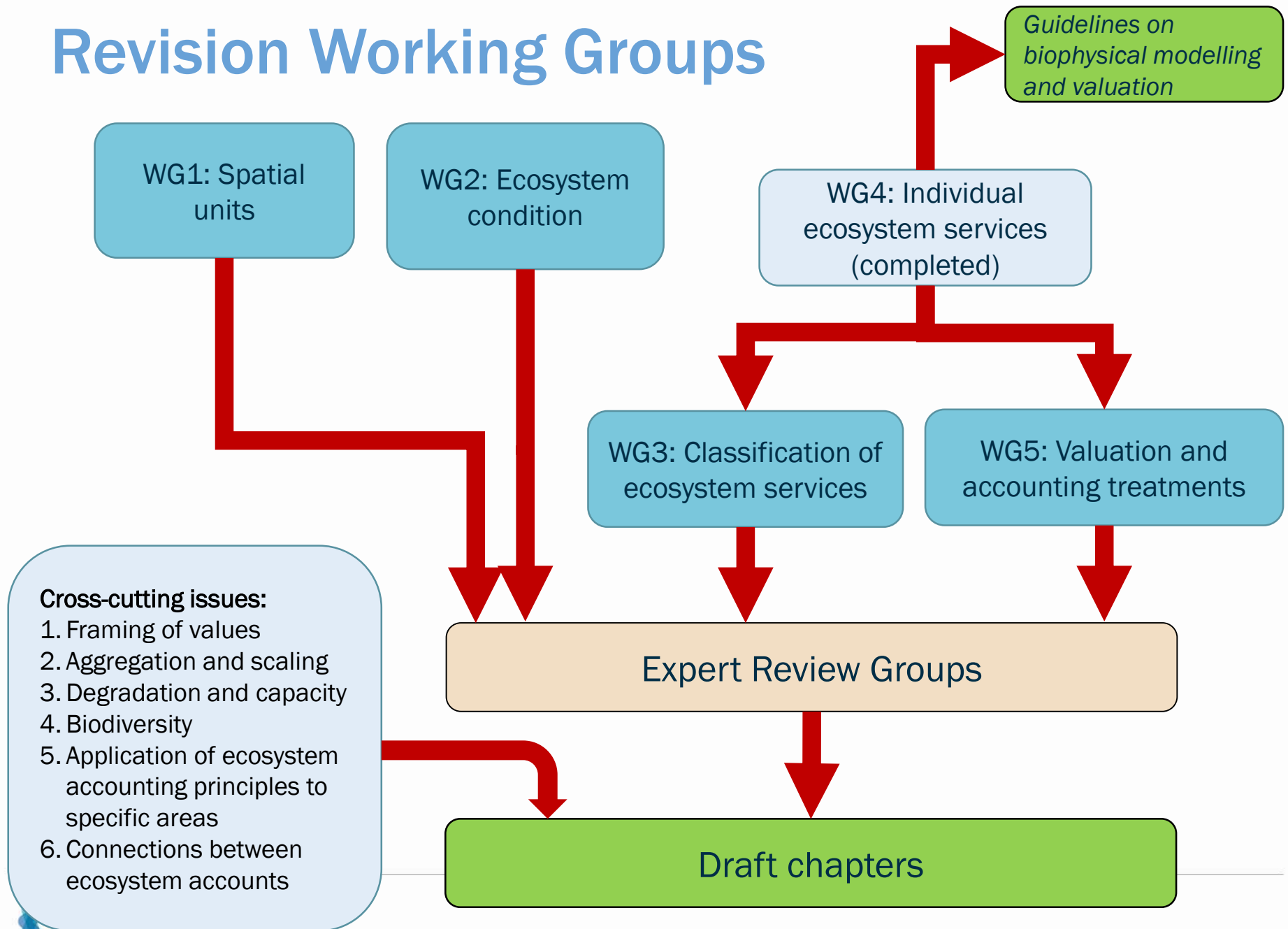


United Nations

Revision of the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting

- Launched in March 2018 with the aim to finish by the end of 2020
 - > For endorsement by **UN Statistical Commission in March 2021**
- **Engagement with various stakeholders** – wide engagement of various communities, including ecologists, environmental economists, earth observation, etc.
- Seek for broad involvement of partners and experts in the process – **in the first year over 80 experts contributed to drafting of the discussion papers**
- Elevation to an agreed **methodological document** – international statistical standard
- Process **aligned** with the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, review of SDG and climate change process

Revision Working Groups



Overview by working group

- **WG1 – spatial units** (led by Sjoerd Schenau, Statistics Netherlands)
 - > Drafted 3 discussion papers (+ 2 background papers)
 - > Involved around 15 experts
 - > Expert review group consultation (May 2019): 29 comments received
- **WG2 – ecosystem condition** (led by Joachim Maes, EU JRC)
 - > Drafted 3 discussion papers (+ 1 online supplement)
 - > Involved around 8 experts
 - > Expert review group consultation (Mar-Apr 2019): 27 comments received

Overview by working group (2)

- **WG4 – individual ecosystem services** (led by Rocky Harris, DEFRA, UK)
 - > Bottom-up approach through 10 key ecosystem services
 - 10 discussion papers outlining their definition(s), biophysical measurement methods and valuation
 - used as input into the discussion papers of WG3 and WG5
 - > Involved around 45 experts (teams of 3+ on each service)
 - > Papers discussed at an expert meeting in January 2019 in New York
 - Group finished its work

Overview by working group (3)

- **WG3 – ecosystem services** (led by Lars Hein, Wageningen University & Rocky Harris, DEFRA, UK)
 - > Drafted 2 papers on definitions of ES and cross-cutting issues
 - > Involved around 15 experts
 - > Expert review group consultation: will be organized later in the year

- **WG5 – valuation and accounting treatments** (led by Juha Siikamaki, IUCN)
 - > Drafted 3 discussion papers
 - > Involved around 15 experts
 - > Expert review group consultation: will be organized later in the year

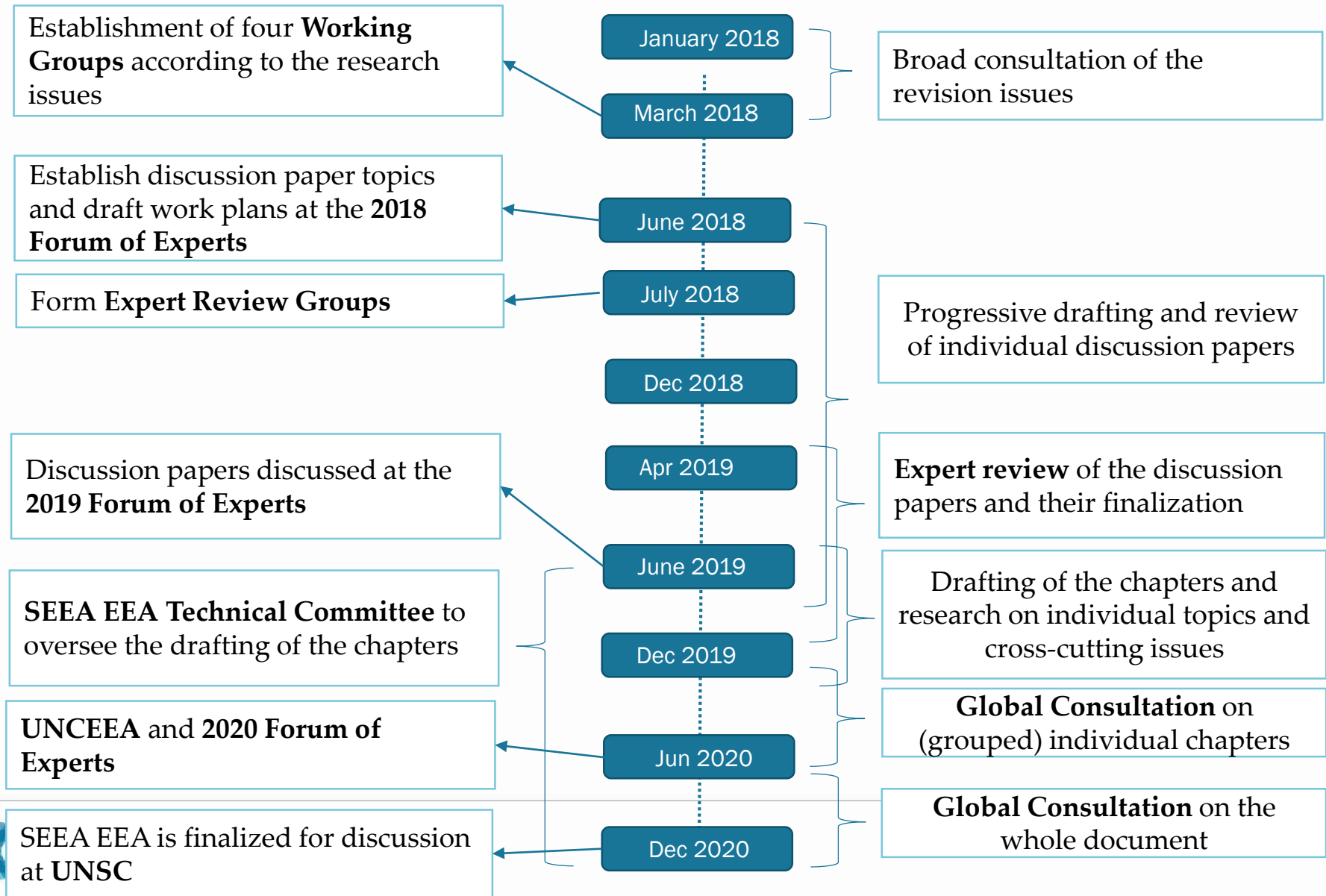
Planning of work: July – December 2019

- **Finalization of discussion papers** on ecosystem services (WG3) and valuation (WG5) and carry out expert review of the discussion papers
- **Drafting of chapters** – editor to start drafting chapters in close consultation with the Technical Committee
- Continue **research on remaining specific issues and cross-cutting issues** – in small groups
- **Testing** of current proposals in particular on:
 - > Ecosystem type classifications
 - > Ecosystem condition indicators by ecosystem type
 - > Ecosystem services modelling and valuation

Planning of work: 2020

- Jan-Mar: Revision of the chapters
- Apr-Jun: Global consultation on (grouped) individual chapters
- June: Report to UNCEEA and discussion at the 2020 Forum of Experts
- Jul-Sep: Revision of the chapters
- Oct-Nov: Global consultation on complete document
- Dec: Submission of draft to UNCEEA and UNSC

Revision process: keystones & timeline



Role of the Technical Committee

- Act as the **editorial board** for the revisited SEEA EEA
- Provide overall **technical guidance** to the editor for the drafting of the chapters
- Ensure the technical and statistical coherence of the document
- The role of the SEEA EEA TC was discussed at the Bureau's June 2019 meeting
 - > TC extended with the five area leads and OECD

Establishing SEEA EEA as a statistical standard

- Opportunities:
 - > Highly **policy relevant** context
 - > Help **advancing measurement** of environmental-economic connections
 - > Present potential for statisticians to **play a key role** in addressing the reality of environmental challenges
 - > **Right time**: SDG indicator review & post-2020 biodiversity framework
 - > Extensive **testing and implementation** was carried out in more than 30 countries
 - > Leverage the experience and knowledge of the **various communities**
- Challenges and risks:
 - > Finding **common language** across multiple disciplines is challenging
 - > **“Buy-in”** and acceptance from the statistical community is required

Establishing SEEA EEA as a statistical standard (2)

- Steps that need to be taken towards establishing SEEA EEA as a standard:
 - > Increase the **understanding about the purpose** in using a statistical and accounting approach to the measurement of the environment
 - > **Increase clarity** on the intended measurement scope of the SEEA EEA
 - > Continue the **open and inclusive engagement** approach with a broad range of communities
 - > Encourage **testing** of SEEA EEA principles
 - > Continue to deliver **substantive content** for further discussion

Engagement - statistical community

- **SEEA EEA Technical Committee:** to provide the role of the editorial board and overall guidance to drafting of the chapters
- **London Group:** to provide technical expert review to discussion papers and draft chapters
- **UNCREEA:** provide overall guidance and engage with the broader statistical community
- **National accounts community:**
 - > Ensure the link with the research agenda for SNA revision
- **Big data community:** assist with testing

Engagement – other communities

- IPBES
- IUCN:
 - > Biodiversity and protected areas
 - > Alignment of databases
 - > IUCN World Congress 2020
- EO4EA: assist with testing and engagement with the earth observation community
- GGIM community
- EU: JRC, EEA, projects (MAIA, MAES)
- Academia – ESP, ACES, etc.

Stay informed - revision website

<https://seea.un.org/content/seea-experimental-ecosystem-accounting-revision>

SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting Revision



In March 2013, the United Nations Statistical Commission endorsed the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting – Experimental Ecosystem Accounting (SEEA EEA) as the basis for commencing testing and further development of this new field of national accounting. The [SEEA EEA](#) was formally published in 2014 as a joint publication of the United Nations, European Commission, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the World Bank.

Given the level of interest, testing and experimentation, the body responsible for the development and advancement of the SEEA, the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEAA), following the decision of the United Nations Statistical Commission from March 2017, determined in June 2017 that a revision of the SEEA EEA drafted in 2012 was appropriate with the intention to reach agreement on as many aspects of Ecosystem accounting as possible by 2020. This revision process has now commenced. The revision process will be based on the SEEA EEA endorsed in 2013, the experiences of the many initiatives on ecosystem accounting in practice, and on the recently released Technical Recommendations in support of the SEEA EEA 2012 ([white cover publication](#)).

As customary when launching a revision process, issues that remain unsolved and need to be addressed have been identified. A list of issues has been developed through discussions at the June 2016 and June 2017 meetings of the UNCEEAA and the October 2017 meeting of the London Group on Environmental Accounting. The current list has been endorsed by the SEEA EEA Technical Committee. The working group under the auspices of the UNCEEAA that will

News

The [2019 Forum of Experts on SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting](#) is taking place on 26-27 June 2019 at Glen Cove, New York. See the [even website](#) for background documents and presentations.

Latest documents

[18 June 2019] Background documents for the **Forum of Experts** are available on the [event website](#).

[1 May 2019] Draft **discussion papers on spatial units** for expert consultation:



Questions for UNCEEA

- Do you have any comments on the **progress made** so far and the status of the **revision issues**?
- Do you agree with the **revision plan** as outlined in the revision planning note?
- The ambition is to elevate the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting to the **level of a standard**, eliminating “Experimental” from the title.
 - > *Are we doing enough to reach the above objective?*
 - > *Should we do more?*
- **Engagement** with the statistical and other communities:
 - > *Are we missing anyone?*
 - > *Do you agree to engage with EO4EA for testing?*



THANK YOU

seea@un.org