



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?

Ecosystem accounting records data on the state and functioning of EAs within an EAA using a combination of relevant variables and indicators. In general, the data production of ecosystem accounts relies a lot on cooperation with experts from different disciplines including national accountants, environmental economists, scientists and geospatial information experts and experts from other areas. This means various institutions in each country need to work together, exchange the data and provide the definitions, classifications, methods and accounting practices on ecosystems. It will create a certain burden on each of these institutions and more experts will need to be involved.

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

The IUCN Global Ecosystem Typology is classified as: Terrestrial (T), Freshwater and saline wetlands (F), Marine (M), Subterranean (S), and transitions between these. All of the mentioned categories have biomes listed in each, and the explanations are clear and detailed. Biggest challenge will present those biomes that belong to transitional category, which can be included in more than one type of ecosystem. This perhaps needs further explanation. This kind of Typology strongly relies on coverage of GIS data, so one could benefit from experiences from networks like NATURA 2000.

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?

The organisation of data on ecosystem extent provides a clear and meaningful entry point to the discussion of ecosystems for those less familiar with ecological concepts and data, which is important. Extent accounts provide a common framing through which other data about ecosystems can be presented. This means that data availability should be explored, through cooperation between institutions. This task could be challenging in some cases, and depends on level of development of other accounts and GIS coverage.

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?

This variables and indicators reflect changes over time in the key characteristics of each EA. As stated in the paper, they must depend on the selected characteristics, data availability, uses of the accounts and policy applications. It is worth to mention that countries are at different stages of developing ecosystem accounts and in some cases there is number of issues that needs to be explored.

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 distinction between natural and anthropogenic reference is important in the measurement of ecosystem condition. Chapters 3 and 4 stated the important distinction between ecosystem processes that are either primarily naturally driven and those that are more directly influenced by human activity and management. In some cases this might be difficult to distinguish, more examples and details would be helpful for better understanding.

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

This typology is used for organizing data on ecosystem condition characteristics, it is a good structure for aggregation.

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

Spatial units for ecosystem accounting data are about the location, size and condition of ecosystems within a given area and how these are changing over time. They need to use land cover data (i.e. hectares) and GIS data (geo-information system data – mapping). Use of GIS data will require good cooperation between institutions.

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

No further comments.

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

No further comments.