System of
Environmental
Economic
Accounting

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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

Name:	Ivaylo Rangelov
Organization & country:	National Statistical Institute, Bulgaria

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?

We have no additional comments to the definition and description of the ecosystem assets and ecosystem accounting areas.

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

The use of the same IUCN - Global Ecosystem Typology as a SEEA reference classification is suitable for conducting international studies and comparisons across EU countries but we hope that the existing specific features at national level for mapping and evaluation of ecosystems must be taken into account. These means additional information is needed for linking /corresponding tables establishment between current classifications used including MAES classification (EUNIS) and Corine Landcover classes to IUCN - Global Ecosystem Typology which is biome orientated (larger scale).

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?

Chapters 4 and 5 define common principles and set out a framework for accounting for the extent and condition of ecosystems and their changes over time.

Although these chapters do not require specific data and parameters reporting at national level should be based on available information from National monitoring networks especially for ecosystem condition and not create additional administrative burden.

In chapter 5 it is explicitly written that ecosystem condition accounts complement and are based on already existing data from environmental monitoring systems concerning the biodiversity (biotic characteristics) and water and soil quality (abiotic characteristics).

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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?

Ecosystem condition accounts record data on the state and functioning of EAs within an EAA using a combination of relevant variables and indicators for abiotic and biotic components. The selected variables and indicators reflect changes over time in the key characteristics of each EA.

We agree with the proposed three-stage approach described in Chapter 5, but it is essential to take into account the state of different ecosystem assets, the right selection of key characteristics in the first stage of the process. In our opinion the document must be further updated with list of the key abiotic and biotic characteristics for the 6 ECT classes, their up-to-date quantive measuring units and corresponding reference levels for the favorable and unfavorable status of each variable/indicator which must be accounted.

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?

For ecosystem accounting, a reference condition represents a state of an ecosystem asset (ET) which is used for setting reference levels. The determination of appropriate reference levels is critical to the derivation of ecosystem condition indicators.
We believe that the concept of ecosystem reference status is a good and necessary approach to assess ecosystem status. It also applies to the development of assessments of the status of biological species and natural habitats reported under various EU directives.

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

We have no additional comments to the ECT (Ecosystem Condition Typology) proposed in table 5.1. The typology includes a set of 3 groups (abiotic, biotic and landscape orientated) and 6 classes (physical, chemical, compositional, structural, functional).
The grouping of individual indicators into 6 classes / categories (physical, chemical, composition, structure, ecosystem functioning and landscape) helps to collect and present complete information on the condition status of ecosystems. But for a coherent and harmonized presentation of the data from all countries additional list is needed which particular indicators must be included and their reference levels in measuring units.
We have no additional comments to the presented accounts in point 5.3 and 5.4

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

No

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

Point 4.21 states that the reference period for calculating ecosystem extent accounts is one year. At the current stage in Bulgaria, the extent of ecosystems is based mainly on data from the Corine Landcover , which is produced over a 6-year period. At this stage, it is not relevant for us to develop annual accounts on ecosystem extent. In the future, this could be realized, provided that an appropriate legal framework is established and an organization for active work between the Bulgarian institutions processing primary data on forests, protected areas, agricultural lands, etc., and last but not least, administrative capacity has been established in the organizations and institutes concerned to take into account the status of ecosystems and the extent of ecosystem assets.

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

With regard to indicators for assessing the ecosystems condition, we think that a list of indicative indicators for selected ecosystems (ecosystem types) must be added in table 5.1 for which there is sufficient internationally available data. This will help make the document easier to understand.

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