



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS  
STATISTICS DIVISION  
UNITED NATIONS



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](mailto:seea@un.org)**

Name:	Michael Bordt
Organization & country:	Fisheries and Oceans Canada

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](mailto: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](mailto: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?**

Fine in general. To account for atmosphere, subterranean and water (freshwater and marine) should emphasize the need to account for the 2D “footprint”.

Also, should encourage accounting to the extent of the EEZ. Agree with representing small linear features as measure of “condition”, but larger ones could be estimated in terms of area.

I suggest to emphasize that national activities on ecosystem accounting should use national standard boundaries and agree on distinctions between terrestrial, freshwater coastal and marine.

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

Excellent starting point. Would benefit having detailed definitions and additional comparisons to other classifications.

**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?**

Physical extent account should match as closely as possible the structure of the monetary asset account. For example, in terms of reasons for change. Will catastrophic, pollution-induced or climate-induced changes be recorded separately? Since these may be linked to massive changes in condition, it would be useful to have some advice on when to record as conversion and when to record as condition change.

The current advice on difference in time frames of managed and natural regression/expansion is useful and might be expanded to distinguish conversion from changes in condition. For example, massive transformations in ecosystem type due to changes in condition are also on a longer time frame.

**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 is an excellent approach to making explicit various levels of measures (variables, indicators, indexes). However, the levels and requirement to index with respect to a reference condition will be more challenging to implement.

**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?**

It will be challenging to implement and maintain international comparability. Could think in terms of international standards (e.g., WHO water quality) that are a minimum, but countries would be welcome to adopt stricter ones. Similarly, the SEEA Ecosystems could propose a set of reference conditions that compare the current conditions with “a reasonably functioning” set of conditions. That is, not necessarily sustainable or pre-human, but not an arbitrary point in the past or some unachievable ideal.

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

It's useful to have groupings of elements to the condition accounts. These will need to be tested.

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

In para 3.35 on vertically stratifying deep ocean...agreed this is an ideal, but not totally necessary. The entire "column" (as for terrestrial as well) could be represented in terms of their 2D footprint.

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

Perhaps could consider degradation/improvement as reasons for change in the extent account.

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

No additional comments.