



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?

The definition of ecosystem assets is adequate, however there is a need to clarify and add more information on the distinction between environmental assets as defined and used in the central framework and ecosystem assets.

It could be useful to provide a few examples of why it is relevant to have the ecosystem asset definition and if possible an schematic showing the distinctions. There is an intent of doing so in paragraph 3.8. Maybe this can be expanded in subsequent chapters, in which case the reader should be guided to the specific chapter in which this will be discussed.

Table 3.1 could be presented in a matrix form, which can allow an easier understanding of the concept of spatial units.

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 is a good reference for ecosystem type; however, it is important to discuss the relationship with other international classification systems fostered by international organizations such as FAO's ecological zones which is used as reference in many countries.

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?

Recording of ecosystem extent is clear in chapter 4, however the traditional accounting table of opening and closing stocks is limited in terms of information on the 'drivers' of change (what changes to what). The reader and technical specialist that will compile accounts should be encouraged to use a matrix presentation which provides additional information relevant for policy. Otherwise the ecosystem extent account will get the risk of not being considered a useful tool in the policy space, particularly for monitoring and management purposes.

Regarding ecosystem condition (capacity), possibly the most important policy question is how the changes in condition can affect the provision of ecosystem services, how and in what proportion a change could affect this provision. These aspects have implications for economic growth. There is an intent of explaining this towards the end of the chapter, but probably there is a need to expand and include clear examples of at least the possibility of doing this in practice, otherwise the accounts again could fall short to provide useful insights for policy makers.

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?

It is good to have some categorization of levels or stages; however, it would be better just to describe a standard table and how it can be adapted to the different levels. It seems more of a compilation issue.

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?

Click here and start typing (The length of your response is not limited by this text box.)

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

As mentioned, it is important that any type of typology considers the usefulness in different policy contexts at country or global levels.

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

An actual map providing a worked example of ecosystem units could be a useful addition.

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

Actual maps providing a worked example would be useful as well as expanding on potential policy uses.

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

Actual maps providing a worked example would be useful as well as expanding on potential policy uses, building on the examples from chapter 4.