

STAT 224

14 April 2021

Dear Colleague,

- 1. Guidelines on Biophysical Modelling for Ecosystem Accounting**
- 2. Invitation to the launch of ARIES for SEEA Explorer**

With the recent adoption of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting - Ecosystem Accounting (SEEA EA), the Statistical Commission “*encouraged countries to implement the system depending on their priorities and, recognizing the challenges to compiling the accounts in practice, requested the Committee to continue to develop compilation tools which make use of global data sources and to create an implementation strategy and methodological and implementation guidance materials for countries in support of continued capacity building*”.

In response to this request, we are pleased to distribute the draft Guidelines on Biophysical Modelling for Ecosystem Accounting (<https://seea.un.org/ecosystem-accounting/biophysical-modelling>) for your review and comment. These guidelines provide an overview of data sources, methods and practical advice on the compilation of extent, condition and ecosystem services accounts in physical units. They also provide recommendations on how to set-up an ecosystem accounting program for institutions starting SEEA EA implementation. Given the fast-paced development of modelling of ecosystem services and global data sources, several tables as indicated in the document will be made available as living documents on the SEEA website.

The guidelines on biophysical modelling are an output of the Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services (NCAVES) project, funded by the European Union. They have been developed under the auspices of the SEEA EA Technical Committee, a body of the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEA) responsible to advance methodology and data on ecosystem accounting. In addition, an editorial board, consisting of national statistical offices and experts in biophysical modelling from academia and NGOs, was established to provide expert advice and guidance on the drafting of the text. In addition, a large number of experts who have been involved in the revision process of the SEEA EA have also reviewed and contributed to various versions of the draft.

We would appreciate it if you could send your comments using the accompanying comment form to seea@un.org by **14 May 2021**. The comments received will be used to finalise the guidelines.

Additional materials supporting the implementation of the SEEA EA are also being developed. These include guidelines on valuation, that provide recommendations on the compilation of monetary ecosystem accounts, the update of the e-learning on the SEEA Ecosystem Accounting to reflect the newly adopted document as well as a data solution called the ARIES for SEEA Explorer.

The ARIES for SEEA Explorer will support the compilation of ecosystem accounts for user-specified areas (such as a country or watershed) using global data sources and basic models and will be hosted on the UN Global Platform. It is our pleasure to invite you to the launch of the ARIES for SEEA Explorer, which will take place through a webinar on 29 April from 9:00 to 10:00AM EST. All relevant information on ARIES for SEEA Explorer and its launch are available at: <https://seea.un.org/events/aries-seea-launch>.

If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact Ms. Alessandra Alfieri, Chief, Environmental-Economic Accounts Section (E-mail: seea@un.org).

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you in advance for your attention to this matter and look forward to your contribution to the advancement and implementation of the SEEA Ecosystem Accounting.

Sincerely yours,



Stefan Schweinfest
Director
United Nations Statistics Division/DESA



Bert Kroese, Chair
United Nations Committee of Experts on
Environmental-Economic Accounting and
Deputy Director General
Statistics Netherlands