



# Report of the SEEA Ecosystem Accounting Technical Committee

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# Overview

- Implementation Strategy for SEEA EA
  - including supporting resources
- SEEA EA Working Groups: Forest Ecosystems and Oceans
- An emerging discussion
- Recap on research agenda and suggestions from UNCEEAA meeting in June

**System of  
Environmental-Economic  
Accounting**  
Ecosystem Accounting



White cover publication, pre-edited text subject to official editing

- Adopted at UNSC in March 2021
- **White cover version** published in Sept 2021
- **Final publication** expected by end of 2022

# SEEA Ecosystem Accounting at 53<sup>rd</sup> session of UNSC, March 2022

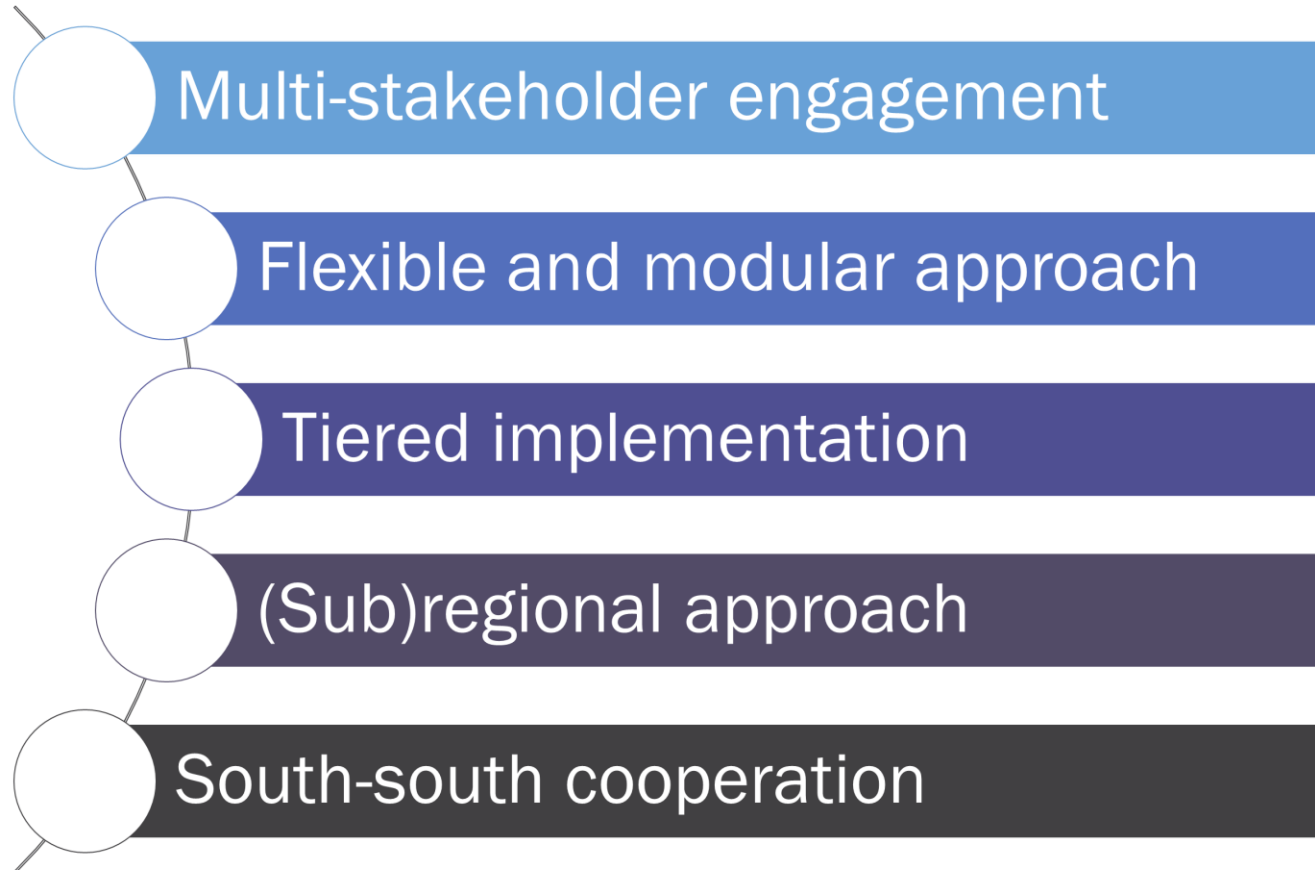
## The Commission

- Adopted the **Implementation Strategy** for SEEA Ecosystem Accounting
- Noted the **high policy demand** for SEEA Ecosystem accounting
- Encouraged **all countries to implement** SEEA Ecosystem Accounting
- Stressed the importance of **adequate funding** to support SEEA implementation in countries
- Requested **translation** of SEEA Ecosystem Accounting into all UN official languages

# SEEA EA Implementation Strategy

- **Overall objective:** scale up the uptake of the SEEA Ecosystem Accounting
- **Suggested target:** at least 60 countries implement at least one account of SEEA EA by 2025 (from 36 currently)
- **Other objectives** include:
  - Supporting mainstreaming of ecosystems and biodiversity in national policy and decision-making
  - Use of SEEA EA in country-level monitoring and reporting
    - e.g. for SDGs, National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to climate targets

# Approach and principles for implementation

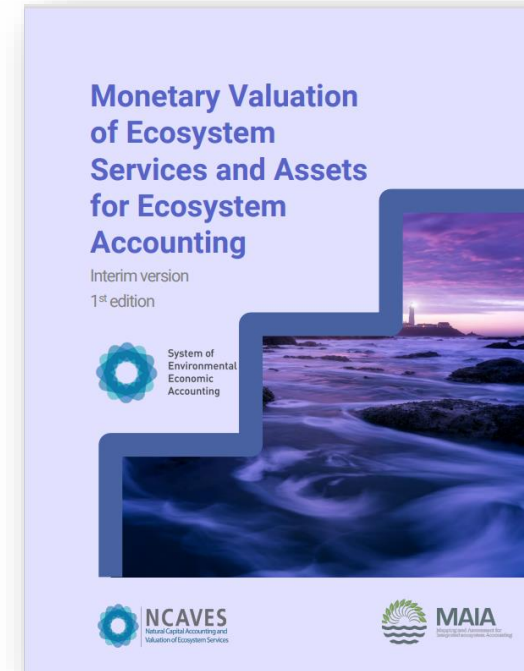
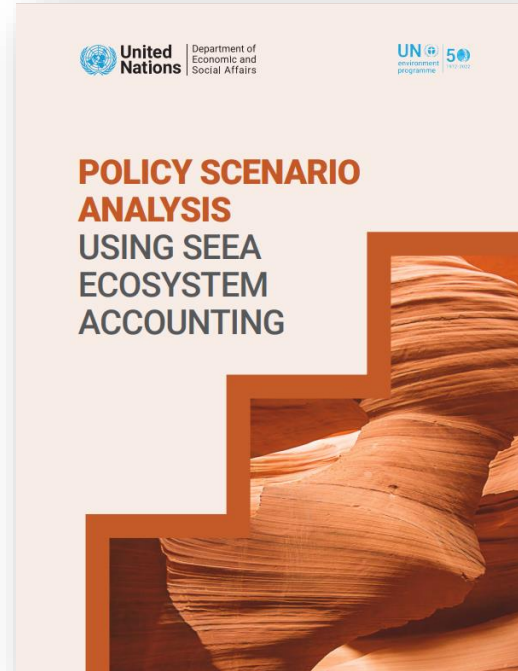
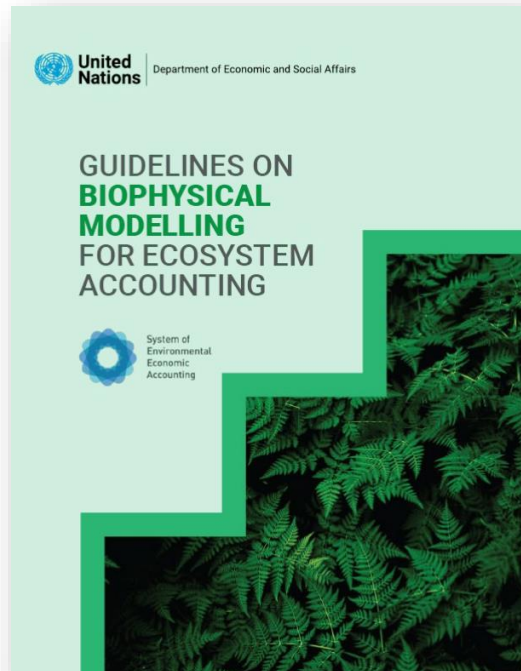


- Likely to require **new partnerships** between NSOs and relevant stakeholders at the national level, including environment ministries
- **Institutional arrangements** likely to vary depending on country context
- Importance of an **inter-disciplinary** approach – requires patience and time



# Materials to support implementation

- Guidelines on **Biophysical Modelling** for Ecosystem Accounting
- **Policy Scenario Analysis** using SEEA Ecosystem Accounting
- **Monetary valuation** of Ecosystem Services and Assets for Ecosystem Accounting



# Training materials and courses

- **SEEA EA e-learning course** (UNSD and ESCAP/SIAP)
  - 8 self-paced e-learning modules
  - Freely available on UN Global Platform

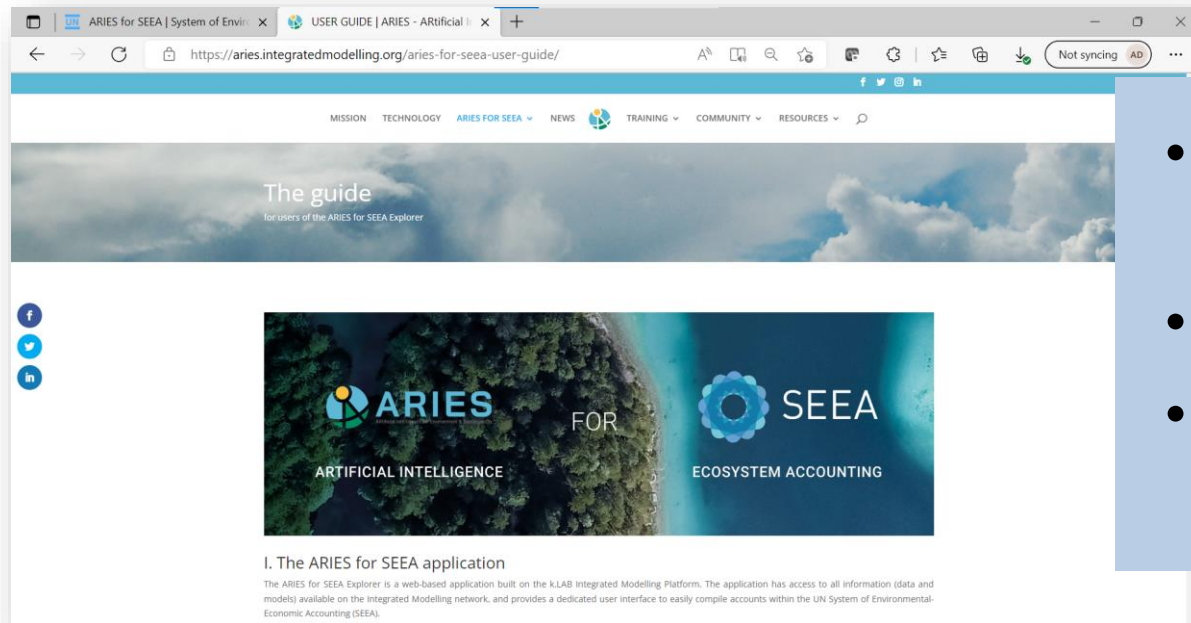


- **Global course** (ESCAP/SIAP and UNSD)
  - April – June 2022 (weekly webinars)
  - ~ 770 participants, mostly from NSOs
- **Regional course for Latin America and the Caribbean** (ECLAC and UNSD)
  - May 2022
  - ~ 240 participants, wide range



# ARIES for SEEA

- ARIES is an **open-source modelling platform** – users can draw on existing models and data or add their own
- **ARIES for SEEA application** launched April 2021 – allows users to compile ecosystem accounts



- **Country level testing** underway
  - including Philippines, Senegal, South Africa
- Testing through **SEEA EA Working Groups**
- Hands-on **training course** for 5 GDSA countries in Kigali, 18-22 July



**United Nations**

Department of  
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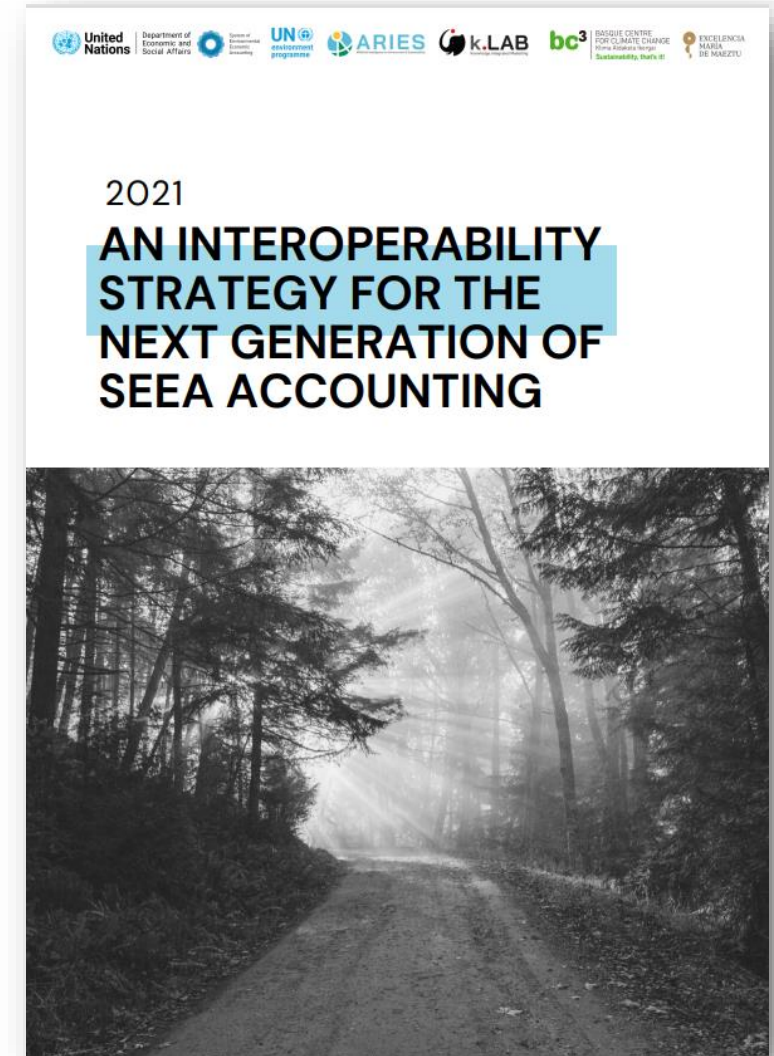


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**Sustainability, that's it!**

# Interoperability strategy

- Closely linked to the work of ARIES
- Published in October 2021
- Aim is to make the data and models that underlie SEEA interoperable – able to work together seamlessly
- Reduce duplication of effort in biophysical modelling
- Data should be FAIR: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable



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Department of  
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System of  
Environmental  
Economic  
Accounting



**ARIES**  
Artificial Intelligence for Environment & Sustainability



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**Sustainability, that's it!**



**EXCELENCIA  
MARÍA  
DE MAEZTU**

# SEEA EA Technical Committee has established two Working Groups

Focusing on two thematic areas:

- **Forest ecosystem accounts** (led by Fernando Santos Martin and Heather Keith)
- **Ocean accounting** (led by Jonathon Khoo and Crystal Bradley)
- Supporting implementation and contributing to the research agenda

# Working Group on Forest Ecosystem Accounts

- Established in 2021, has met 6 times
- Broad membership across national and international organisations
- **Main objective:** To contribute to the advancement of forest ecosystem accounts, including identifying best practices, models, data and tools, looking at both biophysical and monetary aspects
- 4 task teams established:
  - Policy & users
  - Extent
  - Condition
  - Carbon (biophysical and monetary)
- Aim to develop some technical notes for broad consultation



# Key issues

- Definition of forests
  - FAO definition? Very broad
  - IUCN Global Ecosystem Typology?
  - Many countries have national definitions, including in legislation
- Classification of forest ecosystem types
  - Within the IUCN GET, which Ecosystem Functional Groups would be considered “forests”?
- Roles of SEEA CF and SEEA EA in accounting for forests

T1.1 Tropical-subtropical lowland rainforests



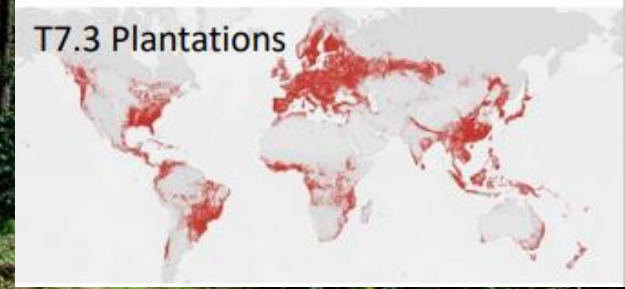
T3 Shrublands and shrubby woodlands biome



T7.3 Plantations



T7.3 Plantations



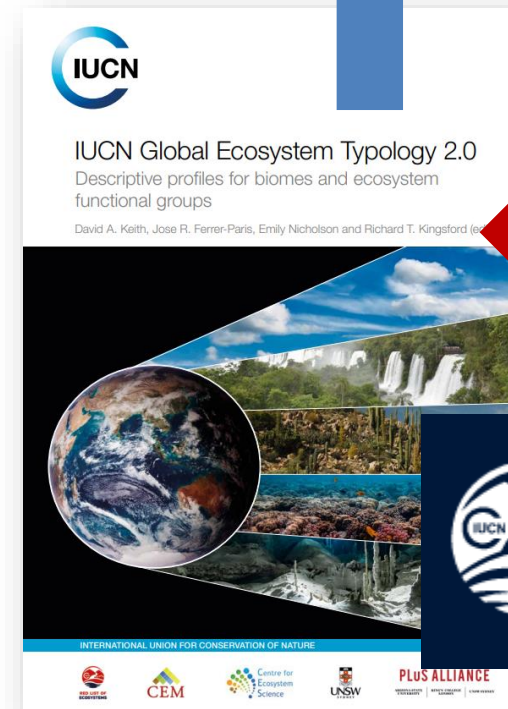
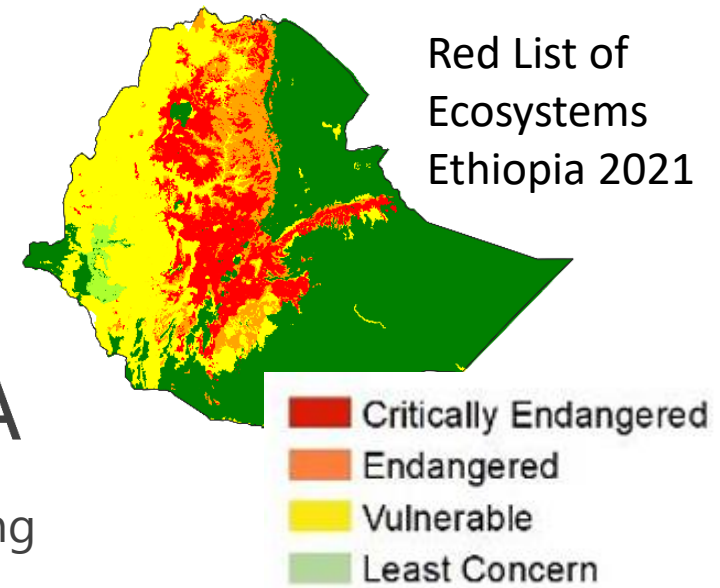
# Working Group on Ocean Accounting

- Proposal to advance a **SEEA Oceans** manual was agreed at UNSC 2021
- Working Group established in early 2022 and has met 4 times
- Broad membership across national and international organisations
- Three task teams established:
  - Policy
  - Data (including for classification and mapping of marine ecosystem types, and condition data)
  - Ocean economy (focusing on SEEA Oceans guidance)
- Global Ocean Accounts Partnership (GOAP) wants to support the activities of the WG



# Emerging discussion: Links between Ecosystem Accounting and Red List of Ecosystems

- Partly prompted by both being proposed as headline indicators for CBD's Post 2020 GBF
- Both underpinned by IUCN Global Ecosystem Typology
- Both include considerations of extent and condition
- Potential for synergies and complementarities?



# Research agenda for SEEA Ecosystem Accounting

- **Conceptual issues**

- Description and measurement of ecosystem capacity
- Classification of ecosystem services
- Treatment of the atmosphere – important for SEEA CF and SEEA EA
- Alignment with the SNA, including asset boundary issues

- **Methods and implementation**

- Measurement techniques – refining and improving
- Data standards and availability – especially for spatial data
- Applications (including thematic accounts) and indicators

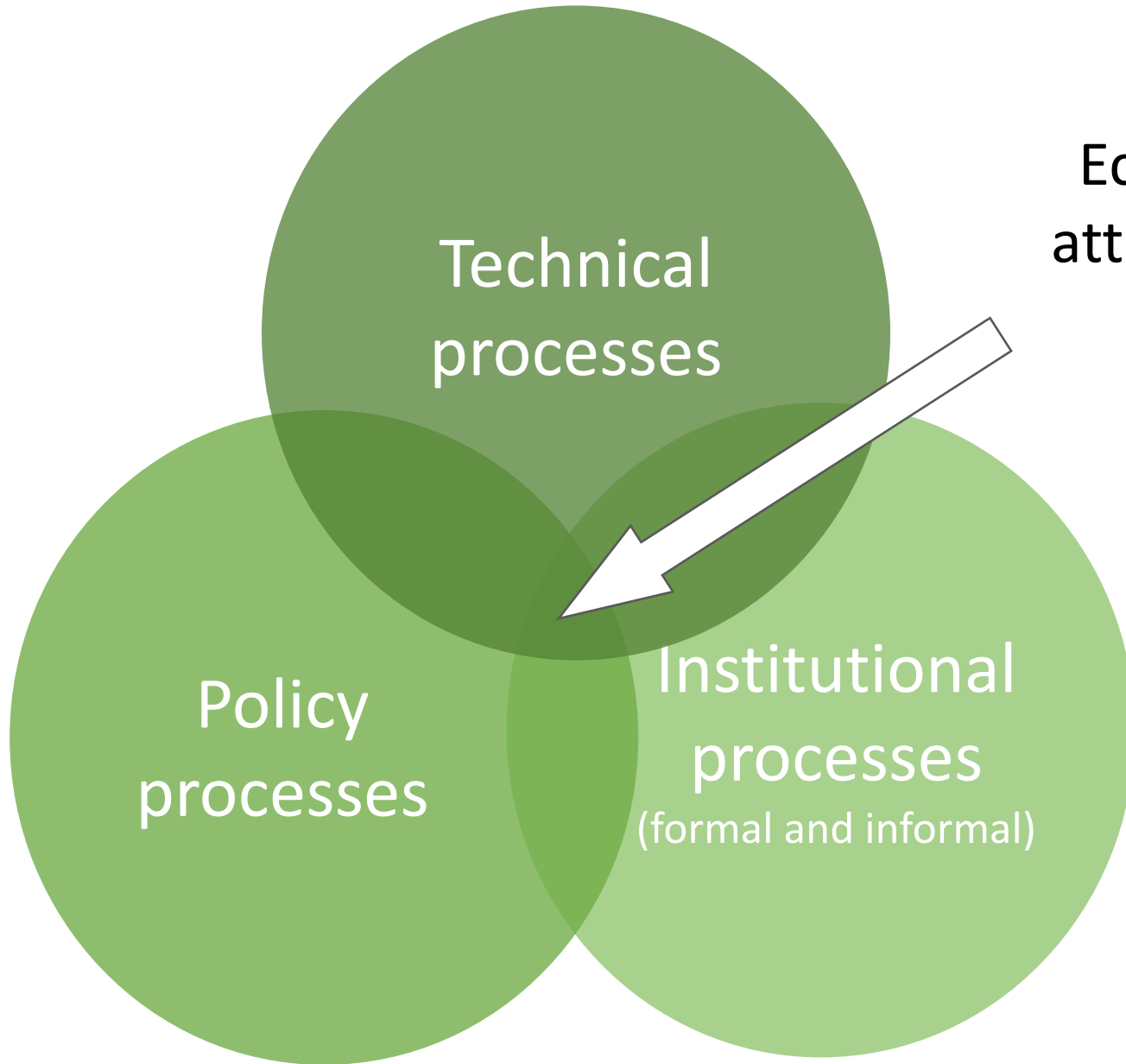
- **Valuation of ecosystem services and ecosystem assets**

- Recognized as a priority research issue
- Being taken up through the SNA update, which includes a focus on valuation principles and methods for non-market transactions and prices

# From the UNCEEA meeting, June 2022

## The Committee:

- Stressed the need for **outreach activities** beyond the statistical community
  - including facilitating engagement between NSOs and national CBD focal points
- Noted the centrality of the **ecosystem condition account** and the need for continued discussion on this
- Noted the importance of further exploring the relationship between **land accounts** and ecosystem accounts
- Suggested **accounting for urban areas** as a priority for further focus, depending on resources
- Highlighted the need for further discussion on issues of **monetary valuation and monetary aggregates**
- Suggested the development of **inventories** on:
  - Methodologies used in developing ecosystem accounts in practice
  - Requests for assistance and ongoing partnerships in developing ecosystem accounts
- Recommended **close collaboration** with the ecological community, environmental economic community and geospatial community in taking ecosystem accounting forward



Ecosystem accounting requires attention to technical, policy and institutional processes

**All three are  
equally important**