



System of  
Environmental  
Economic  
Accounting

# **2019 Forum of Experts on SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting**

26 – 27 June 2019

Glen Cove, New York, USA

## **Agenda**

Version: 24 June 2019



United Nations



**Day 1: Wednesday, 26 June 2019**  
*(meeting room for all plenary sessions: Embassy)*

**8:30 Registration**

**9:00 Welcome and introductions**

Welcome and opening of the Forum and quick tour de table of introductions of the participants.

**9:45 Session 1: The (international) policy context for ecosystem accounting**

A key note presentation to provide the rationale for ecosystem accounting in the current policy contexts, with connections to SDGs, the role of official statistics, the potential of big data, international processes especially in 2020 (CBD, UNFCCC, IPBES), the role of environmental NGOs, the role of academia and research organisations, and the role of business and finance community.

Chair: Alessandra Alfieri (UNSD)

Video address: Elliot Harris (UN)

Keynote speech: Sir Bob Watson (Former chair of IPBES)

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**11:00 Coffee break**

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**11:30 Session 2: Advances in ecosystem accounting concepts and treatments**

This session will provide a summary of the SEEA EEA revision process, the research agenda, progress since the 2018 Forum of Experts, state of play on the research program among the working groups, plans for ongoing research and expert review. It will also elaborate on the engagement with different communities and processes in which the SEEA can influence.

Chair: Anton Steurer (Eurostat)

Presentations:

- Alessandra Alfieri (UNSD): SEEA EEA revision update
- Sjoerd Schenau (Statistics Netherlands): Spatial units
- Joachim Maes (EU JRC): Ecosystem condition
- Lars Hein (Wageningen University): Ecosystem services concepts
- Rocky Harris (DEFRA, UK): Individual ecosystem services
- Juha Siikamaki (IUCN): Valuation and accounting treatments

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**12:30 Lunch**

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**13:30 Session 3: Parallel sessions on SEEA EEA research areas**

Building on the summary in Session 2, in this session break-out groups will focus on 3-4 questions emerging from the discussion papers that will have been drafted by each of the four research areas. The aim is to provide a forum for discussing remaining issues on the research agenda, raise any concerns with the work done so far and consider ongoing development of technical guidance in each area.

### **Session 3a: Spatial units (meeting room: Nassau)**

Chair: Sjoerd Schenau (Statistics Netherlands)

Presentations:

- Emily Nicholson (Deakin University): Presentation of option 1
- Roger Sayre (U.S. Geological Survey): Presentation of option 2
- Patrick Bogaart (Statistics Netherlands): Presentation of option 3

### **Session 3b: Ecosystem condition (meeting room: Maple)**

Chair: Joachim Maes (EU JRC)

Presentations:

- Heather Keith (Australian National University): Purpose of condition account (brief introduction to the discussion paper 2.1)
- Amanda Driver (SANBI, South Africa): Review of condition accounts (brief introductions to the discussion paper 2.2)
- Joachim Maes (EU JRC): Criteria and typology (brief introductions to the discussion paper 2.3)
- Country examples:
  - Francisco Jimenez Nava (INEGI, Mexico): Condition accounts in practice: example from Mexico
  - Simon Jakobsson (NINA, Norway): Condition accounts in practice: example from Norway

### **Session 3c: Ecosystem services (meeting room: Embassy)**

Chairs: Lars Hein (Wageningen University) and Rocky Harris (DEFRA, UK)

Presentations:

- Lars Hein (Wageningen University): Overview of current conceptual model and issues for discussion, thoughts about a typology
- Rocky Harris (DEFRA, UK): Ecosystem services boundaries

### **Session 3d: Valuation and accounting treatments (meeting room: Sycamore)**

Chair: Juha Siikamaki (IUCN)

Presentations:

- David Barton (NINA, Norway): Brief presentation on Discussion Paper 5.1
- Eli Fenichel (Yale University): Brief presentation on Discussion Paper 5.3
- Peter Van De Ven (OECD): Brief presentation on Discussion Paper 5.4

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15:30 Coffee break

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## 16:00 Session 4: Parallel session I

### Session 4a: Advances in biophysical modelling for ecosystem accounting (*room: Embassy*)

Biophysical modelling of ecosystems and the services they provide is important to support the development of accounts. A range of examples of tools and/or case studies will be presented in this session.

Chair: Rosimeiry Portela (Conservation international)

Presentations:

- Stephanie Tomscha (Victoria University of Wellington): Guidelines for biophysical modelling
- Ferdinando Villa (Basque centre for climate change): The ARIES (pre-recorded)
- Bethanna Jackson (Victoria University of Wellington): LUCI Toolbox for SEEA
- Lars Hein (Wageningen University): Using machine learning for ecosystem accounting

### Session 4b: Aligning data and indicators (*meeting room: Sycamore*)

This session will present and discuss developments in source data for ecosystem accounting (e.g. work of group on global data sets under the UN Global Data Platform) and progress in defining indicators that might emerge from the SEEA EEA (e.g. for supporting the SDGs). The session will also integrate presentations on country experiences on indicators for SDGs from the SEEA.

Chair: Markus Lehman (Secretariat of the CBD)

Presentations:

- Steven King (UNEP-WCMC): Setting the scene: Indicators in the context of the SEEA EEA revision process and NCA&VES project
- Source data for ecosystem accounting:
  - Timothy Wright (Conservation International): Source data for ecosystem accounting at global level – EO4EA initiative
  - Sjoerd Schenau (Statistics Netherlands): Testing the global data sets in Netherlands
- SEEA for reporting on the indicator initiatives:
  - Sven Kaumanns (Destatis) and Viveka Palm (Statistics Sweden): Update on the UNCEEA work on mainstreaming for SEEA for reporting on the SDG
  - P. Bhanumati (Government of India): National indicator initiatives and its linkage to SEEA: India experience
  - Alison Fairbrass (University College London): Linking SEEA with the GGKP initiative on natural capital reporting indicators framework

## 17:30 Plenary debrief from Parallel Sessions 3 & 4

Chairs of each group make a short summary of the presentations and discussion in the groups, followed by Q&A.

## 18:00 End of Day 1

## Day 2: Thursday, 27 June 2019

*(meeting room for all plenary sessions: Embassy)*

### **8:30 Session 5: Parallel sessions: Ecosystem accounting for specific themes**

There is ongoing work on a variety of specific themes that can be showcased. Parallel groups will cover advances in ecosystem extent, condition and services measurement of these themes, based on country-based examples as the focus in these sessions.

#### **Session 5a: Urban areas (meeting room: Nassau)**

Chair: François Soulard (Statistics Canada)

Presentations:

- François Soulard (Statistics Canada): Brief presentation of discussion paper 1.2 and a summary of comments received from expert review
- Practical examples:
  - Joachim Maes (JRC EU): Accounting for urban areas in Europe
  - Per Arild Garnåsjordet (Statistics Norway): Integrating ecosystem extent and condition accounts using a flexible spatial concept: Conceptual issues and illustrations from the URBAN EEA project in the Oslo region
- Data issues:
  - David Barton (NINA, Norway): Digital platforms for municipal ecosystem accounting – testing the URBAN TEP in Oslo
  - Steve King (UNEP-WCMC): Access to public open space in cities – SDG 11.7.1

#### **Session 5b: Marine areas (meeting room: Maple)**

Chair: Michael Bordt (ESCAP/Government of Canada)

Presentations:

- Michael Bordt (ESCAP/Government of Canada): Presentation on the development of Ocean accounts
- Country examples:
  - Mose Topeto (Samoa Bureau of Statistics): Samoa's Ocean Accounts pilot
  - Amanda Clark (Australian Bureau of Statistics): Review/update of Great Barrier Reef experimental ecosystem accounts
  - Anthony Dvargas (Stony Brook University, US): Update on Long Island coastal bays pilot
- Technical presentations:
  - Rocky Harris (DEFRA, UK): Defra's Marine Natural Capital Accounts
  - Roger Sayre (U.S. Geological Survey): Update on Coastal Marine Units

#### **Session 5c: Carbon stocks and flows (meeting room: Embassy)**

Chairs: Heather Keith (ANU) and Bram Edens (UNSD)

Presentations:

- Heather Keith (ANU): Policy demands for accounting for carbon related services

- Country example: Patrick Bogaart (Statistics Netherlands): Carbon and air emission accounts
- Peter Elsasser (Thunen institute): Defining and valuing carbon related services in the SEEA-EEA
- Bram Edens (UNSD): Recording options for carbon

#### **Session 5d: Protected areas (meeting room: Sycamore)**

Chair: Mandy Driver (SANBI, South Africa)

Presentations:

- Mandy Driver (SANBI, South Africa): Purpose and aims of the session, including the rationale for protected area accounts
- Claire Brown (UNEP-WCMC): Presentation on the outline for a potential guidance note for a SEEA subsystem for protected areas
- Johannes Kruse (GIZ, German): Plans for protected area accounts from the GIZ perspective
- Country examples:
  - Mandy Driver (SANBI, South Africa): Protected area accounts in South Africa
  - INEGI, Mexico: Protected area-related accounts in Mexico
  - Conservation International: Protected area-related accounts in Peru

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10:30 Coffee break

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#### **11:00 Session 6: Biodiversity and ecosystem accounting**

Biodiversity refers to the variety and variability of life on Earth, including three levels of ecological organisation – ecosystems, species and genes. With ecosystems as an accounting organizing principle in the SEEA EEA, a clear and common understanding is needed about how the SEEA could incorporate other levels of biodiversity to support policy and decision making. This session will highlight the relevance of biodiversity and advances in thinking about the connections between biodiversity measurement and the SEEA.

Chair: Juha Siikamaki (IUCN)

Presentations:

- Thomas Brooks (IUCN): Experimental Biodiversity Accounting
- Carl Obst (UNSD Consultant): Options for incorporating biodiversity in the SEEA

Discussant: Emily Nicholson (Deakin University, Australia)

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12:00 Lunch

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## 13:00 Session 7: Parallel sessions II

### Session 7a: Advances in scenario analysis using ecosystem accounts (meeting room: Embassy)

There are ongoing advances in scenario analysis of data to support the development of applications that use ecosystem accounting information. A range of examples of tools and/or case studies will be presented in this session.

Chair: Anton Steurer (Eurostat)

Presentations:

- William Speller (UN Environment): Setting the scene: Scenario analysis in the context of the SEEA EEA revision process and NCA&VES project
- Andrea Bassi (UN Consultant): Overview of Scenario Analysis modelling for policy mainstreaming in the context of SEEA EEA
- Onil Banerjee (IADB): Integrated Economic-Environmental Modelling Framework
- Country examples:
  - Nelson Fernandes (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro): Scenario analysis pilot in Brazil - The impact of Land use change on water availability and soil retention
  - Zhiyun Ouyang (Chinese Academy of Sciences): Scenario analysis pilot in China - Ecological compensation standards for the Xijiang River Basin in Guangxi

Discussant: Benjamin Burkhard (Leibniz Universität Hannover)

### Session 7b: Advances in data and tools in corporate accounting for natural capital (room: Sycamore)

This session will present the advances on data and tools to support natural capital measurement in the corporate sector and attempt to make a link with the business accounting community.

Chair: Glenn-Marie Lange (World Bank)

Presentations:

- Johan Lammerant (UN Consultant): Presentation on state of play of corporate sustainability reporting
- Carl Obst (UN Consultant): Case study of Forico and using the SEEA framework for businesses
- Thomas Verheyen (European Commission): Corporate sustainability accounting and reporting trends in the E.U.
- Claire Brown (UNEP-WCMC): Findings of the Data Information Flow project

## 14:30 Session 8: Integrating SEEA EEA in sustainability and wealth accounting

From an economic policy perspective wealth accounting provides a strong rationale for the compilation of SEEA EEA. This session would highlight the linkages between ecosystem accounting and macro-economic measurement and policy including, for example, the policy narrative, the relevant conceptual connections and treatments and approaches to applying the concepts in practice.

Chair: Peter van de Ven (OECD)

Presentations:

- Glenn-Marie Lange (World Bank): Methodology for measuring natural capital used in the Changing Wealth of Nations and how it relates to the SEEA
- Pushpam Kumar (UN Environment): Methodology for measuring natural capital used in the Inclusive Wealth Report and how it relates to the SEEA

Discussant: Eli Fenichel (Yale University)

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**15:30 Coffee break**

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**16:00 Plenary debrief from Parallel Sessions 5 & 7**

Chairs of each group make a short summary of the presentations and discussion in the groups, followed by Q&A.

**16:30 Session 9: Opportunities for advancing SEEA accounts**

There are numerous ecosystem accounting related projects and initiatives underway around the world. This session could highlight the progress and achievements to date and opportunities for moving forward. A particular focus would be on the role of environmental policy and big data initiatives, alongside demonstration of advances in UN and WAVES projects at country level. The session would run as a short series of interventions and descriptions (1-2 slides maximum) to build awareness.

Chair: Fernando Tudela (UN Consultant)

**17:30 Session 10: Moving forward**

A wrap up session will clarify the next steps in the SEEA EEA revision process and planned engagement activities.

Chair: Anton Steurer (Eurostat)

Presentation: Alessandra Alfieri (UNSD)

**18:00 End of the Forum**