



System of
Environmental
Economic
Accounting

Forum of Experts on SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting 2019

26 – 27 June 2019

Glen Cove, New York, USA

Concept Note

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FORUM OF EXPERTS ON SEEA EXPERIMENTAL ECOSYSTEM ACCOUNTING 2019

CONCEPT NOTE

- Date:** 26 – 27 June 2019
- Location:** Glen Cove, New York, USA
- Audience:** The main audience are the practitioners and experts across all sectors (government, corporate, academia, civil society) in national and environmental accounts, measurement of ecosystems and biodiversity, ecosystem services, environmental valuation, and geo-spatial data and analysis. Policy analysis across environment, economic, planning, development and sectoral (e.g. agriculture, forestry, tourism, oceans) domains, and decision-makers from all levels of government, non-government agencies, business and finance are also welcome to attend.

Background

1. The System of Environmental-Economic Accounting 2012-Experimental Ecosystem Accounting (SEEA EEA) was endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 2013 and is an important step in the development of a statistical framework for ecosystem accounting. It provides a common set of terms, concepts, classifications, and an integrated accounting structure for measuring ecosystem services and ecosystem condition in both physical and monetary terms. The SEEA EEA has drawn many experts from many sectors and disciplines to consider the national accounting and statistical approach to the organisation of data about ecosystems and the integration of these data with standard economic information. Aside from the integration of data, one attraction has been that the core ecosystem accounting framework can be applied at a wide range of spatial scales from the national level to catchment and individual ecosystem scales.
2. Since its endorsement in 2013, there are more than 30 countries that have started piloting ecosystem accounting. Learning from the experience and building on scientific advances the Statistical Commission endorsed the revision of the SEEA EEA by 2020, with the objective of reaching a consensus on concepts and methods on ecosystem accounting building on the testing and experimentation that has been going on in the past years and learning from the experience of various initiatives working on relevant projects, including the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), and the natural capital assessment projects, as well as on availability of new technologies.
3. Under the auspices of the UN Committee of Experts on Environmental-Economic Accounting (UNCEEAA), UNSD supports the methodological development of the SEEA EEA and implementation of ecosystem accounting in countries through its regular work programme and externally-funded projects including the recently-

completed Norwegian-funded Advancing Natural Capital Accounting (ANCA) project and more recently the European Union-funded Natural Capital Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services project.

4. This Forum builds on earlier Forums organized in 2013, 2015 and 2018 by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and partners to advance the theory, practice and application of ecosystem accounting, considering the fast-evolving nature of the topic and ever-increasing policy interest. Bringing together a broad range of expertise and experiences, the forums have contributed to the development of materials to support the advancement of ecosystem accounting and have continued to build the community of experts, policy analysts and decision makers who recognize the potential of ecosystem accounting to support the achievement of positive environmental, economic and social outcomes. The forums have worked effectively in conjunction with the discussion of ecosystem accounting at the long-established annual meetings of the London Group on Environmental-Economic Accounting.
5. The SEEA EEA has been recognized as the main statistical framework for ecosystem accounting in various other international and regional policy initiatives. These include, but are not limited to, the World Bank-led Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services (WAVES) partnership, the EU's Knowledge Innovation Project-Integrated Natural Capital Accounts (KIP-INCA), the Valuation and Accounting of Natural Capital for Green Economy initiative launched by UN Environment, the EU project on Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services (MAES), the UNDP Biodiversity Finance (BIOFIN) initiative, the Convention on Biodiversity Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and in particular target 2, the UNCCD initiative on Land Degradation Neutrality and the UN Environment-led initiative on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB).

Objectives

6. The main objectives of the Forum's events are to:
 - Showcase relevant methodological and technical advances; including in relation to global datasets, modelling and forecasting, and indicator initiatives;
 - Advance the research agenda on ecosystem accounting in support of the revision of the SEEA EEA by providing guidance on accounting treatments, opportunities for testing and issues requiring further research; and
 - Share experiences and best-practices in compiling and applying ecosystem accounting including in the context of the Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services project.

Proposed agenda and organization

7. The Forum is open to all people interested in ecosystem accounting and will showcase the rationale and potential of ecosystem accounting. Potential areas for presentation include:
 - i. Biodiversity and ecosystem accounting
 - ii. Global datasets to support ecosystem accounting
 - iii. Modelling and forecasting applications
 - iv. Ecosystem accounting based indicators
 - v. Accounting for urban areas
 - vi. Accounting for coastal and marine areas
 - vii. Integrating SEEA EEA in sustainability and wealth accounting
 - viii. Framing the opportunities for testing SEEA EEA
 - ix. Sustainable finance and other corporate applications
8. The Forum will be organized using different modalities, including plenary sessions and breakout groups, to ensure engagement of a large number of participants. Presentations will range across country experiences, technical research, project summaries and policy applications.

Organization of the meeting

9. The Forum will be organized by the United Nations Statistics Division in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme, and the World Bank, and is an activity under the “Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services” project funded by the European Union. It will be held on 26 and 27 June 2019 at The Mansion at Glen Cove, 200 Dosoris Ln, Glen Cove, NY 11542, USA. The Forum will be held in English only.