



System of
Environmental
Economic
Accounting

SEEA EEA Revision: A framing of values for ecosystem accounting

Presentation for SEEA EEA Virtual Expert Forum

15 July 2020



United Nations

Issue #5: Framing of values

- Valuation of ecosystems and the environment is a complex and multi-faceted exercise and accounting will not provide a complete valuation reflecting all perspectives.
- Given this reality how should the core ecosystem accounts of the revised SEEA EEA be best considered in light of a broad framing of values, such as considered in IPBES.
- Key questions are:
 - > What approach should be taken to the framing of values for the revised SEEA EEA?
 - > What is the role of different ecosystem accounts in supporting discussion of values?
 - > What complementary and alternative presentations of accounting based data can best support discussion of ecosystem values?

Placing discussion of values in context

- Working group #5 on Valuation and accounting – Discussion paper 5.1
 - > Considered 7 meanings of the term value reflecting, broadly, a measurable characteristic (hence valuation) or a concept/principle.
 - > Considered value from the perspective of different disciplines including philosophy, psychology, economics
 - > Summarised valuation frameworks
 - Total Economic Value framework (use, non-use, option, existence, bequest)
 - Turner (2001, 2003): Anthropocentric, non-anthropocentric
 - IPBES : Intrinsic, instrumental and relational

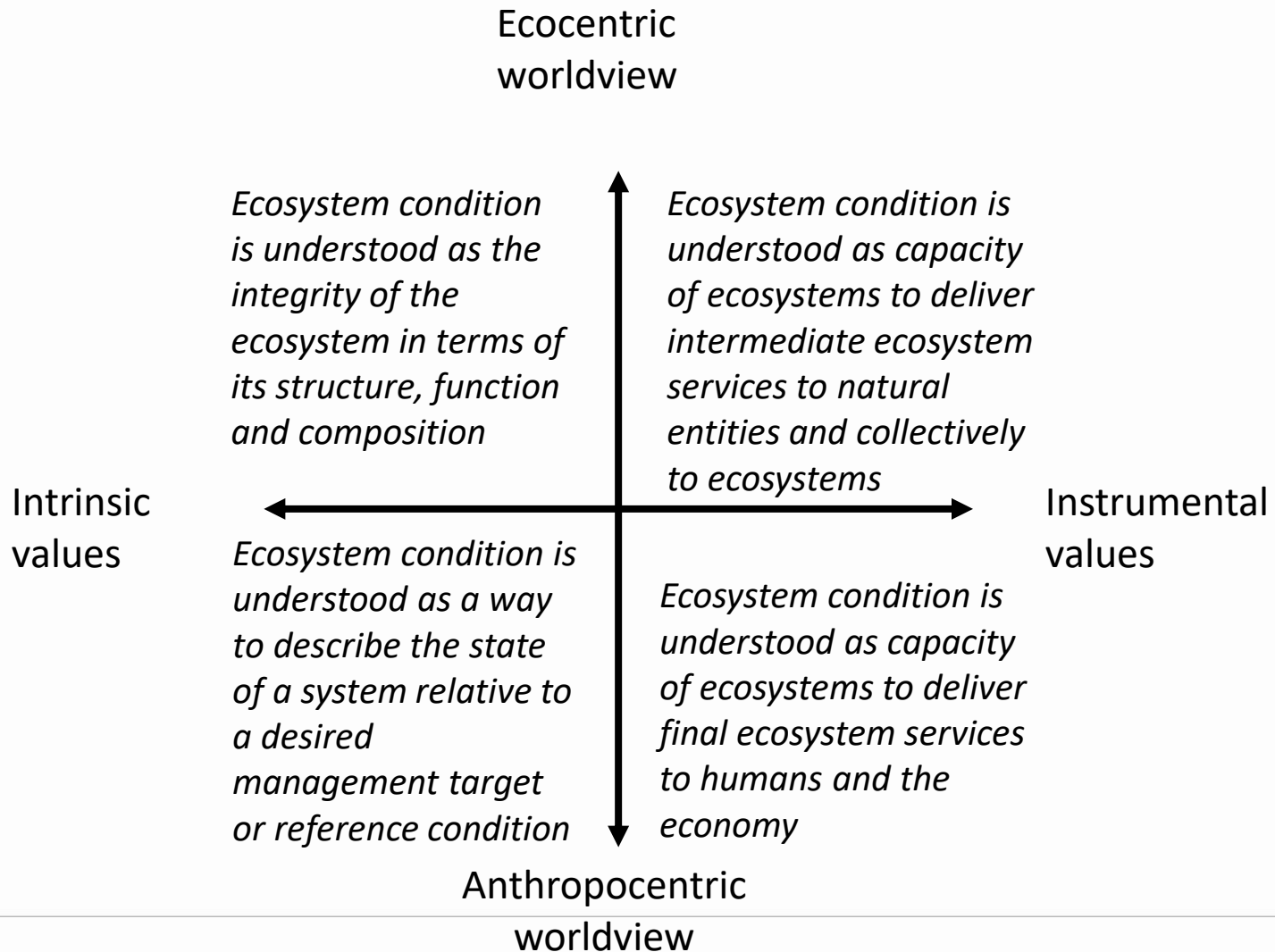
A general values framework #1

FOCI OF VALUE	TYPES OF VALUE	EXAMPLES
NATURE	Non-anthropocentric (Intrinsic)	Animal welfare/rights
		Gaia, Mother Earth
NATURE'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO PEOPLE (NCP)	Instrumental	Evolutionary and ecological processes
		Genetic diversity, species diversity
GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE	Anthropocentric	Habitat creation and maintenance, pollination and propagule dispersal, regulation of climate
		Food and feed, energy, materials
		Physical and experiential interactions with nature, symbolic meaning, inspiration
		Physical, mental, emotional health
		Way of life
	Relational	Cultural identity, sense of place
		Social cohesion



Source: Discussion paper 5.1 from Pascual (2012)

A general values framework #2



Other framing considerations

- Monetary and non-monetary measures
- Systemic features and characteristics (e.g. biodiversity, resilience, capacity)
- Valuation of ends (e.g. human well-being) or means (e.g. available resources)
- Conception of sustainability (e.g. weak vs strong; critical natural capital)
- Baseline description (e.g. current institutional context) or evaluation of counterfactual (e.g. altered policies, alternative scenarios)

Aspects of monetary valuation

- Necessary to distinguish / clarify
 - > Exchange/transaction values and welfare/total surplus values
 - > Market and non-market values (including considering near and far markets)
 - > Values and prices (especially in accounting terms)
 - > Marginal and average prices
 - > Current and constant prices/volumes (is the effect of price change removed)
 - > Gross and net values (are costs of capital deducted)
 - > Valuation of assets or income/production
 - > Private and social costs and benefits
 - > Site or firm level vs aggregate or macro values

Initial linking of SEEA EEA to values

FOCI OF VALUE	TYPES OF VALUE	EXAMPLES	
NATURE	Non-anthropocentric (Intrinsic)	Animal welfare/rights	Extent and condition accounts
		Gaia, Mother Earth	
NATURE'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO PEOPLE (NCP)	Anthropocentric	Evolutionary and ecological processes	Ecosystem service and monetary asset accounts
		Genetic diversity, species diversity	
		Habitat creation and maintenance, pollination and propagule dispersal, regulation of climate	
GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE	Instrumental	Food and feed, energy, materials	Ecosystem service and monetary asset accounts
		Physical and experiential interactions with nature, symbolic meaning, inspiration	
		Physical, mental, emotional health	
		Way of life	
		Cultural identity, sense of place	
GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE	Relational	Social cohesion	Ecosystem service and monetary asset accounts



Source: Discussion paper 5.1 from Pascual (2012)

Messages/current direction

1. No lack of material on values
2. SEEA can organise data to reflect some but not all perspectives on value – it will not provide an estimate of the value of nature
3. Data in physical terms (extent, condition and services) will be of high relevance in supporting a broad discussion of the value of nature
4. The focus of monetary valuation in the revised SEEA EEA will be on instrumental values going beyond the SNA production boundary
5. The intention is to use exchange values, reflecting the SNA accounting principles, to provide baseline descriptions of monetary values for ecosystem services and ecosystem assets
6. The data from the core ecosystem accounts can be used to support various analysis and complementary valuation approaches

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Enjoy the discussion



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