



System of  
Environmental  
Economic  
Accounting

# Virtual Expert Forum on SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounting 2020

online

## Draft Schedule

Version: 9 June 2020



United Nations



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## Background

The Virtual Technical Expert Forum builds on earlier Forums of Experts organized in 2013, 2015, 2018 and 2019 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. The previous Forums brought together a broad range of expertise and experiences, and have thus 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.

As the work on the revision of the SEEA EEA is advancing, there are a range of outstanding technical issues that need to be discussed in a set of focused technical discussions. For that reason, the 2020 Forum will focus on technical discussions among experts on specific issues rather than sharing of experience and information. The Forum was supposed to take place face-to-face (8-9 July in New York area) in a reduced format to encourage in-depth discussions among experts in environmental and ecosystem accounting, biodiversity, ecology and environmental economics. Considering the current travel restrictions due to COVID-19, the Forum will take place virtually, taking advantage of modern technologies over a number of days (see below) for a few hours to ensure broad participation of experts across the globe. Rather than postponing the Forum, it was decided to administer it virtually to ensure that the revision process is on track with the ultimate objective of submitting the SEEA EEA to the UN Statistical Commission for its adoption in March 2021.

## Objectives

The main objectives of the Virtual Technical Expert Forum are to:

- Review progress, assess feedback from consultation processes and consider the results of testing across the range of research issues that are the focus of the SEEA EEA revision process;
- Provide technical guidance on resolving research issues, including options for accounting treatments; and
- Discuss cross-cutting issues and identify outstanding issues on the research agenda.

## Virtual Forum modality

The Forum will consist of a series of 3-hour teleconference sessions dedicated to particular topics, including cross-cutting issues and chapters of the revised SEEA EEA. Each session will take place after the end of the global consultation on a set of chapters and will consider the comments received and in particular the issues for discussion and proposals/options that emerged from the consultation. The outcomes from the Forum will serve as primary input to the discussion and decisions of the SEEA EEA Technical Committee. In addition, cross-cutting issues will be identified, for example concerning biodiversity, ocean, capacity, indicators and aggregates, and discussed in separate sessions.

## Proposed session schedule

Each session will take place at 7-10am NY time (13:00-16:00 CET; 21:00-24:00 Australia) on the below specified dates. Each session will be a mix of conceptual and practical application discussions, with the specific topics outlined below. Final agenda and questions for discussion will be developed for each session at a later stage.

Sessions will consist of general presentations and discussions in plenary, as well as small-group discussions in virtual breakout rooms structured around guiding discussion questions. First day of each session will be intended for a larger audience, whereas the second day for a smaller audience and discussions in breakout rooms. For that purpose, the Forum participants will be divided in smaller groups. Participants will need to sign-up for each session through a Google Form that will be provided and indicate which day they plan to attend. Only registered participants will receive the connection links.

The core of the Forum will be sessions around the main research areas and one cross-cutting session. The following topics and dates are proposed:

### 1. Ecosystem extent and condition – 23 & 24 June

*Led by Sjoerd Schenau and Joachim Maes*

*Day 1 – 23 June (7-10am NY time) – general discussions on:*

- Overview of progress on ecosystem extent and condition for the SEEA EEA revision
- Discussion on methodological issues and responses to issues identified through the first global consultation
- Presentation on potential data sources

*Day 2 – 24 June (7-10am NY time) – technical discussions on:*

- Specific technical issues that are still outstanding
- Results of the testing of ecosystem classifications and the condition framework
- Potential list of condition indicators by ecosystem types from the testing results and connections to global data sets (a minimum list of indicators for country implementation)

### 2. Valuation and accounting treatments – 14 & 15 July

*Led by Juha Siikamaki*

*Day 1 – 14 July (7-10am NY time) – general discussions on:*

- Overview of progress on the valuation and accounting treatments for the SEEA EEA revision
- Discussion on the links between SEEA EEA and other approaches
- Country examples and applications

*Day 2 – 15 July (7-10am NY time) – technical discussions on:*

- Responses to issues identified through the first global consultation (specific issues to be identified from the comments received)
- Framing of values
- Cross-cutting issues from the valuation perspective
- Link to the SNA revision

### **3. Ecosystem services – 24 & 25 August (TBC)**

*Day 1 – 24 August (7-10am NY time) – led by Carl Obst:*

- Issues identified through the first global consultation (specific issues to be identified from the comments received)

*Day 2 – 25 August (7-10am NY time) – led by Ken Bagstad:*

- Presentation and discussion on the SEEA palette development for ARIES
- Measuring capacity
- Country examples

### **4. Links to other initiatives and indicators – September/October (TBC, one day only)**

*List of topics to be discussed:*

- What are the global indicators and how SEEA EEA is linked to them? In particular related to the CBD post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the UNCCD Land Degradation Neutrality, GEP.
- What are the aggregates that can be derived from the SEEA EEA tables (analysis to be made in advance)?

At a later stage (possibly in September) further sessions on cross-cutting issues may be organized on the following topics:

- Biodiversity
- Ocean accounts
- Capacity
- Urban accounting
- Aggregates and indicators
- Possible other topics (TBD)