

## Part I: Questionnaire for Country Participants

Name:

Affiliation: Bureau Of Economic Analysis (BEA)

Country: United States of America

**1. What types of environmental and economic accounts have already been implemented in your country and for how long? (If none, go to question 6)**

For a number of years starting in the mid-1970s, BEA maintained detailed accounts for pollution and abatement control, including data on capital stocks; these were discontinued for budgetary reasons. More recently, in 1994, BEA reported some results from its IEESA (Integrated Economic and Environmental Satellite Accounts) program. The IEESAs were similar to the SEEAs, but were distinct in some ways, for example in their focus on investment (the development of natural resources). They developed a prototype structure, and reported estimates for mineral assets and some illustrative estimates for timber. Work on the IEESAs was discontinued for budgetary reasons.

**2. Have you used or are you aware of any use made by others in your country of the handbook of National Accounting *Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting 2003*, commonly referred to as SEEA-2003 and/or of the handbook of National Accounting *Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting – An Operational Manual (2000)*? How useful were these documents in the implementation of the accounts?**

BEA has studied, used, and contributed to various versions of the SEEAs, including predecessor volumes to the 2000 handbook. They were useful in some respects; BEA has focused on maintaining objectivity in the environmental accounts, and on ensuring the continuity and consistency of these accounts with other economic accounts and basic economic principles.

**3. Please, describe the major difficulties/constraints that have been encountered during the compilation of these accounts (e.g., financial support, lack of human resources, training, etc.).**

Financial support from the Congress has been a constraint. Another important constraint is lack of progress in the scientific and economic literature on some conceptual issues, including the pricing of non-market goods for use in important policy topics; this remains controversial.

**4. Was the implementation of the accounts driven from a policy demand or was it supply driven?**

Both. On the supply side, economists since Kuznets have advocated accounting for changes in the value of environmental resources. On the demand side, some policymakers, at the

national, state, and local level, have taken an interest in these accounts; also, the U.S. is a signatory party to the Rio treaty, which calls for countries to develop such accounts.

**5. Have environmental-economic accounts been used for policy making in your country? If so, what were the policy issues?**

Not so much. There has been some interest in using environmental accounts to help manage federally controlled lands and waters, for example in allocating timber, water, grazing rights, mineral rights, fishing rights, and in ecotourism development.

**6. Does your country have future plans for starting/continuing and/or expanding the implementation of environmental- economic accounting? Please describe.**

BEA would like to remain active in research and study of conceptual issues related to the construction of these accounts; we currently support research into valuing non-market activities, and further work along these lines is part of our long-term agenda. We currently have no explicit short-term plans to start or expand such accounts.

**7. What seems to be the major constraints in further implementing environmental-economic accounting in your country?**

Financial and conceptual; our position is that further progress on measuring and valuing non-market activity is needed.

**8. In your opinion, what should be the role of the Task Force on environmental-economic accounting?**

To ensure that the environmental accounts are consistent with existing sets of national accounts; for example, they must include both prices and quantities.

**9. In your opinion, which activities of the Task Force would best facilitate in your country the implementation of environmental-economic accounting and the promotion of its uses at the policy level?**

The development of methodologies that are consistent with existing sets of national economic accounts, that can be consistently applied across countries, and that can be easily replicated.

**Additional comments:**