



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS  
STATISTICS DIVISION  
UNITED NATIONS

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**Expert Meeting on Ecosystem Accounts**  
**Melbourne, Australia, 16-18 May 2012**

## **PROVISIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WORK**

**Wednesday, May 16th**

*Registration (8:30-9:00)*

*Morning Session (9:00AM-1:00PM) Chair: Ivo Havinga, UNSD*

### **1. Opening of the meeting**

Opening Statements:

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BoM)

Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE)

This Expert Meeting builds on the outcomes of two previous meetings, held in 2011 in London and Copenhagen, and on work completed thus far by the SEEA Ecosystem Accounts Editorial Board, established in early 2012. A central and critical purpose for this third meeting of the expert group will be to revisit key issues in light of new research completed since the meeting in London and to review the draft outline and material for SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounts.

### **2. Outline of SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounts,**

a. Draft Outline (Carl Obst, SEEA Editor)

Based on the discussions of the Editorial Board, and following from conclusions of the expert group in London, a draft outline for SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounts has been prepared. The proposal is for a relatively short document consisting of six chapters.

*Afternoon Session (2:00PM-5:00PM) Chair: S. Suresh Kumar, CSO India*

### **3. Structure for SEEA Ecosystem Accounts, Discussants: Rocky Harris, DEFRA UK and Anton Steurer, EUROSTAT**

- a. Draft Chapter 2
- b. The "DACH" Approach for Ecosystem Services Accounting: Recommendations for Integrating ES in National Accounting (B. Schweppe-Kraft, A. Hauser, N. Merky, E. Schwaiger and M. Nagy)

The Editorial Board, at a meeting held in New York in March, 2012, agreed in principle upon the general structure that will underpin the scope and design of SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounts. The structure will be described in Chapter 2. The structure defines the stocks and flows that are compiled in the accounting tables and the relationships among the key concepts introduced in the accounts, including ecosystem services, ecosystem condition, ecosystem capacity, and ecosystem degradation.

**4. Ecosystem Services Measurement and Accounting**, Discussant: Roy Haines-Young, University of Nottingham

- a. Draft Chapter 3
- b. Common International Classification of Ecosystem Services: Issues Arising from the London Expert Meeting (R. Haines-Young)

The structure for ecosystem accounts, as proposed under item 3, identifies ecosystem services as a fundamental starting point for understanding the scope of the rest of the ecosystem accounting system. Chapter 3 of SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounts will define ecosystem services for the purpose of accounting, present a hierarchical classification and the relevant ecosystem service accounts. Chapter 3 will also discuss various types of measurement for ecosystem services and criteria for identifying the most relevant services for integration with national accounts.

**Thursday, May 17th**

*Morning Session (9:00AM-1:00PM) Chair: Mark Eigenraam (DSE, Australia)*

**5. Carbon Accounting**, Discussant: Judith Ajani, Australian National University

- a. A Carbon Asset Accounting Framework and Data Population (J. Ajani)
- b. Carbon Accounts: Issues Arising from the London Expert Meeting (R. Haines-Young)

There was broad agreement in London that carbon accounting should be an important and prominent feature of SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounts given the relevance of the carbon cycle in relation to ecosystem services and ecosystem capacity and given recent improvements in measurement possibilities. In particular, it was agreed that calculation of the balance of carbon remaining in an ecosystem after each period should be included as a key output of the accounting tables. An improved understanding on the structure and scope for carbon accounting has emerged based on work done by several experts as part of the follow-up after London but further discussion is needed to resolve how to best present the relationships between carbon and ecosystem accounting.

**6. Biodiversity Accounting**, Discussant: Burkhard Schweppe-Kraft, BfN Germany

- a. Biodiversity Accounts and Indices (P.A. Garnåsjordet, J. McDonald, P. Co-sier, B. ten Brink, A. Saltelli, B. Magnusson, S. Nybø, O. Skarpaas, and I. Aslaksen)
- b. Proposed Biodiversity Accounting in Australia (J. McDonald, P. Gibbons, S. Bond, A. Cadogan-Cowper, J. Ovington and M. Vardon)
- c. Natural Capital in Germany: State and Valuation with special reference to Biodiversity (B. Schweppe-Kraft)

In London, the expert group concluded that further work was needed to clarify how biodiversity should be integrated into the accounts, noting that multiple possibilities were discussed at the meeting. While the various possibilities were not inherently mutually exclusive, the expert group believed that, if possible, SEEA should be specific about the role of biodiversity in ecosystem accounting. Based on work done by a number of experts since the London meeting, a more precisely defined scope for integrating biodiversity measures into the accounts has emerged as measures of ecosystem capacity. At the same time further discussion is needed on the relationship between accounting for biodiversity and ecosystem accounting.

*Afternoon Session (2:00PM-5:00PM) Chair: Jean-Louis Weber, European Environment Agency*

**7. Units and Scaling of the Accounts**, Discussant: Richard Mount, BoM Australia

- a. Draft Chapter 2
- b. Land Cover Mapping, Land Cover Classification and Accounting Units (L. Kolttola, M. Bordt, D. Clarke, R. Mount, S.S. Kumar, S. Uhde, A. De Gregorio)

Significant progress on the issues of statistical units and the scaling of the accounts has been made based on a collaborative effort by a sub-group of experts following the meeting in London, combined with further discussions by the Editorial Board. The recommended principles in regards to these issues will be summarized in Chapter 2 of the SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounts.

**8. Capacity and Condition Measures and Degradation**, Discussant: Per Arild Garnåsjordet, Statistics Norway

- a. Draft material on Chapter 4

Issue 7 in the list of issues for ecosystem accounts discussed in Copenhagen and London, was designed to address questions of how to account for the capacity, condition or health of an ecosystem and also the question of how far the accounts needed to go in regards to calculating composite indices. Several proposals have been put forward and the Editorial Board has adapted some of the existing studies around a series of proposed 'asset' accounts pertaining to spatial areas. The description of these accounts will be in Chapter 4 of SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounts.

**Friday, May 18th**

*Morning Session (9:00AM-1:00PM) Chair: Jawed Khan, ONS, UK*

**9. Valuation in Ecosystem Accounts**, Discussant: Gary Stoneham, Australia

- a. SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounts Note: Valuation Principles in the SNA and the SEEA
- b. SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounts Note: Summary of Approaches to Valuing Ecosystem Services
- c. The Realisation of Economic Valuation: Practical examples of valuation exercises (B. Schweppe-Kraft)

On the topic of monetary valuation, a conclusion of the expert group, reaffirmed by the Editorial Board, is that valuations in SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounts should be consistent with the valuation principles of the SNA. The Editorial Board thus concluded that a first step towards producing recommendations on valuation would be to provide a summary of the SNA principles with the specific implications for the accounts and the relationships to techniques commonly used in ecosystem accounting literature. The expert group will be invited to review this summary and also consider some new research conducted by the WAVES partnership.

*Afternoon Session (2:00PM-4:00PM) Chair: Leo Kottola, Statistics Finland*

**10. Sequence of the Accounts, Aggregation and Integration**, Discussant: Peter Comisari, ABS Australia

- a. Annotated Outline on Chapter 6
- b. Two Options for Recording Ecosystem Services in Sequence of Account (Bram Edens and Mark de Haan, Statistics Netherlands)

Since the meeting in London, the Editorial Board has discussed the issues of a sequence of accounts, and particularly issues around aggregation and integration of statistics for the purpose of producing key aggregates and summary indicators. The expert group will have before it some draft material on these topics, which will be covered in Chapter 6 of SEEA Experimental Ecosystem Accounts. Several options for structuring the sequence of the accounts will be considered.

*Concluding Session (4:00PM-5:00PM) Chair: Ivo Havinga, UNSD*

**11. Concluding remarks, way-forward and closing of the meeting**

The main objective for the concluding session will be to build consensus on the way forward and to summarize the key outcomes of the meeting.