



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
STATISTICS DIVISION
UNITED NATIONS

**SEEA Revision
Issue 21
Cover Note**

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Issue #21: Forest accounts

Outcome paper for global consultation

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Issue description

21 a. Classification of forests The SEEA-2003 presents a number of classifications for forest based on the FAO (TBFRA2005). Since then the FAO classifications have changed. In addition, classifications put forward by the IPCC should also be considered. The revised SEEA needs to analyze these classifications and develop a proposal for the revised SEEA taking into consideration the existing classifications.

21 b. Carbon sequestration Carbon sequestration has become increasingly an important issue. The SEEA-2003 briefly discusses accounts for carbon sequestration by forest. Should carbon sequestration and more broadly carbon accounts be addressed in a more systematic way in the revised SEEA, building on the work of the UNFCCC and FAO? Should carbon accounts cover the entire carbon cycle be included in volume?

Background

Given the importance of forests as not only a source of wood and wood products but also as part of the management of greenhouse gas emissions it is clear that developments in classifications and data requirements need to be reflected in the revised SEEA.

Work on classifications for forest accounts and related tables for the revised SEEA started in the London Group in 2007. The starting point for the work was the recommendations of the SEEA-2003, in which forests are shown to have links to the assets: timber resources, wooded land and forest ecosystems. From this starting point, the work was developed through London Group discussions, discussion with experts from FAO, some national statistical institutes and other organizations, reference to the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA), and consideration of reports on the Global Forest Resource Assessment (FRA) that is undertaken by the FAO.

It was not the objective of this work to develop a new, separate SEEA classification for forests. Rather, the work was designed to align the detail available in a range of existing forest classifications with the broader SEEA asset classification. The work has therefore resulted in a set of proposed asset classes rather than a classification. Further, since the overall classification of assets for the SEEA is also under review the recommendations made under this issue will need to be reassessed once the outcomes from the work on the asset classification is complete.

Finally, it is noted that the focus of this paper and the work of the London Group has been on the way in which forests are presented in the asset accounts of the SEEA. There is no explicit discussion on the treatment or presentation of the supply and use of timber and other forests

resources although there are connections that can be made between the discussion in this paper and those issues.

Summary of outcomes

The following are the key recommendations emerging from the discussion of this issue within the London Group.

Recommendation 21.1: That, subject to decisions made on the broader classification of assets in the revised SEEA, the asset classes for forests presented in Tables 1a, 1b and 1c of the outcome paper should be adopted in the revised SEEA.

Recommendation 21.2: That, in the revised SEEA, the distinction between cultivated and non-cultivated forests should be based on the definitions in the FAO Global Forest Resource Assessment (FRA) where cultivated forests are comprised of timber in planted forests and timber in other naturally regenerated forests; and non-cultivated forests are equivalent to timber in primary forests.

Recommendation 21.3: That the asset accounts for forests presented in the outcome paper (Tables 5, 6, 7 & 8) should be incorporated into the revised SEEA.

Recommendation 21.4: That in the revised SEEA a table (Outcome paper: Table 9) should be incorporated that presents information on the supply and use of non-wood forest products.

Recommendation 21.5: That Volume 1 of the revised SEEA should discuss carbon accounting in timber resources and that a complete discussion of carbon accounting should be included in SEEA Volume 2.

Questions

1. Do you agree that, subject to decisions made on the broader classification of assets in the revised SEEA, the asset classes for forests presented in Tables 1a, 1b and 1c of the outcome paper should be adopted in the revised SEEA?
2. Do you agree that, in the revised SEEA, the distinction between cultivated and non-cultivated forests should be based on the definitions in the FAO Global Forest Resource Assessment (FRA) where cultivated forests are comprised of timber in planted forests and timber in other naturally regenerated forests; and non-cultivated forests are equivalent to timber in primary forests?
3. Do you agree that the asset accounts for forests presented in the outcome paper (Tables 5, 6, 7 & 8) should be incorporated into the revised SEEA?
4. Do you agree that in the revised SEEA a table (Outcome paper: Table 9) should be incorporated that presents information on the supply and use of non-wood forest products?
5. Do you agree that Volume 1 of the revised SEEA should discuss carbon accounting in timber resources and that a complete discussion of carbon accounting should be included in SEEA Volume 2?
6. Any other comments?

To submit responses to these questions please complete the accompanying comment form available on the website. You are encouraged to submit a short response to the questions (yes/no/no comment) even if you have no further comments to submit.

Deadline for responses: 6 December 2010